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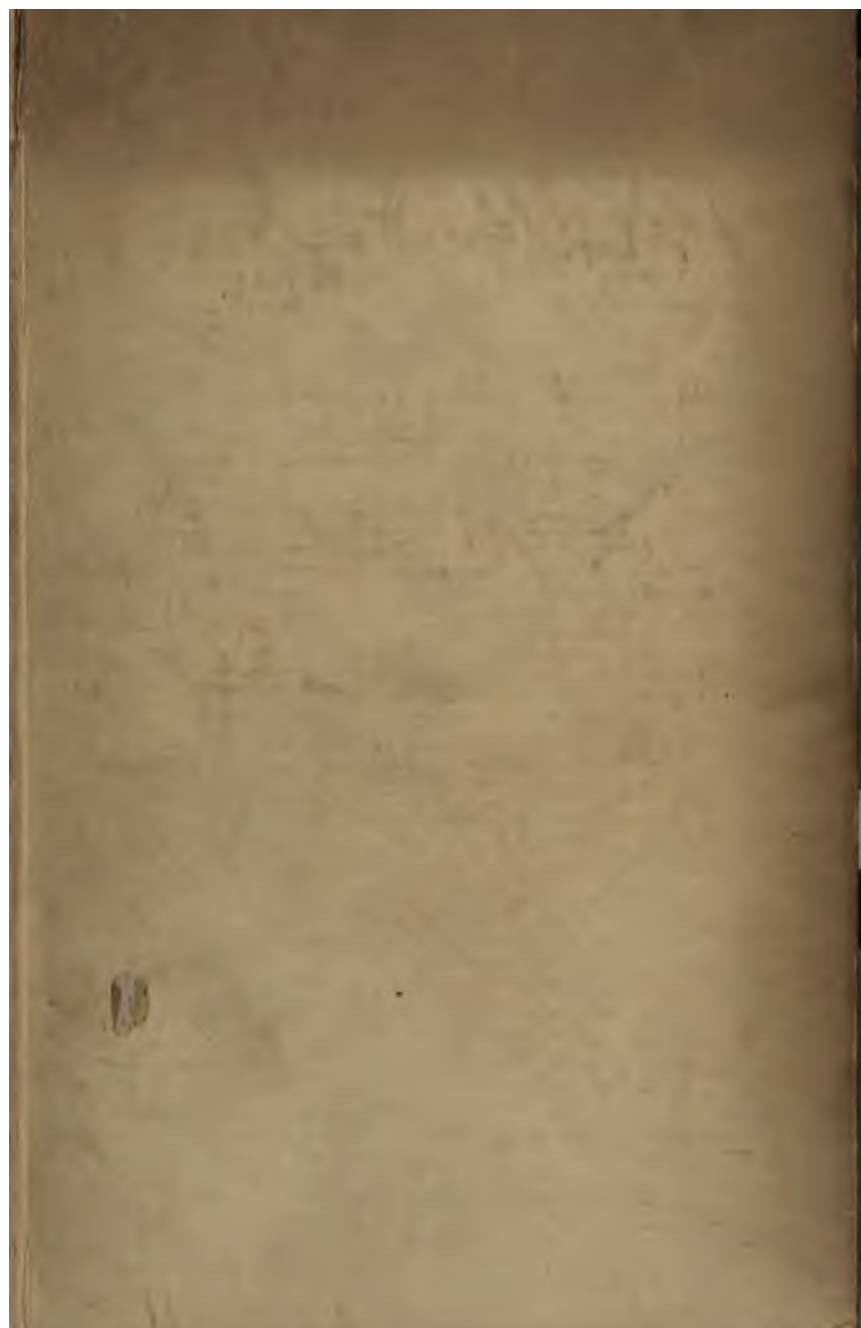
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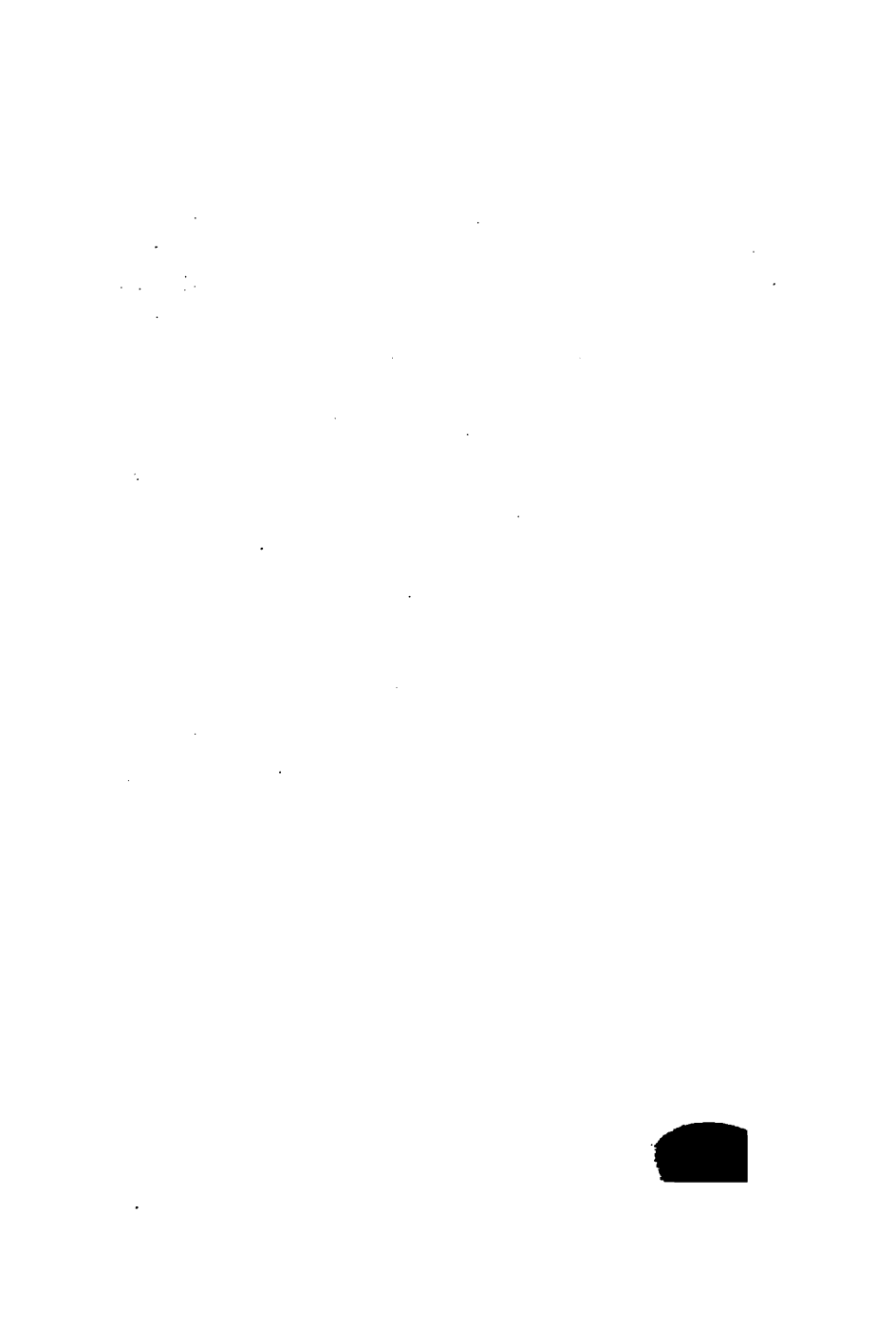
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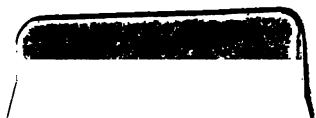


47. 1134.





47. 1134.





THE
IRISH PRIEST.

LONDON :
SPOTTISWOODE and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

THE
IRISH PRIEST;

OR,
WHAT FOR IRELAND?

LONDON :
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1847.



TO
M A R Y.

HEART'S SWEETEST CHILD, THIS IS TO THEE!

Years hence, some may say: "Thus and thus
thought thy father."

But thou mayest open this book, and say:
"Not so; for thus and thus thought my father;
and dearly, dearly loved he me."

P R E A M B L E.

THE Editor thinks it right to subjoin the following : comment were superfluous.

“ So you have been getting up something Irish ; ‘ Irish Priest,’ I hear. Irish bother ! Heavens, have we not enough of Ireland ? Irish politics, Irish distresses, Irish potatoes, Irish peasants ! Irish devil, I say. Let them howl, and die !

“ Irish, quotha ! By-and-by, I suppose, we must adopt the brogue ; send our children to Dublin to complete their education ; and ask Her Majesty to arrange so as to present us with an Irish prince, and hold her court i’ the Castle, on the strength of it ?

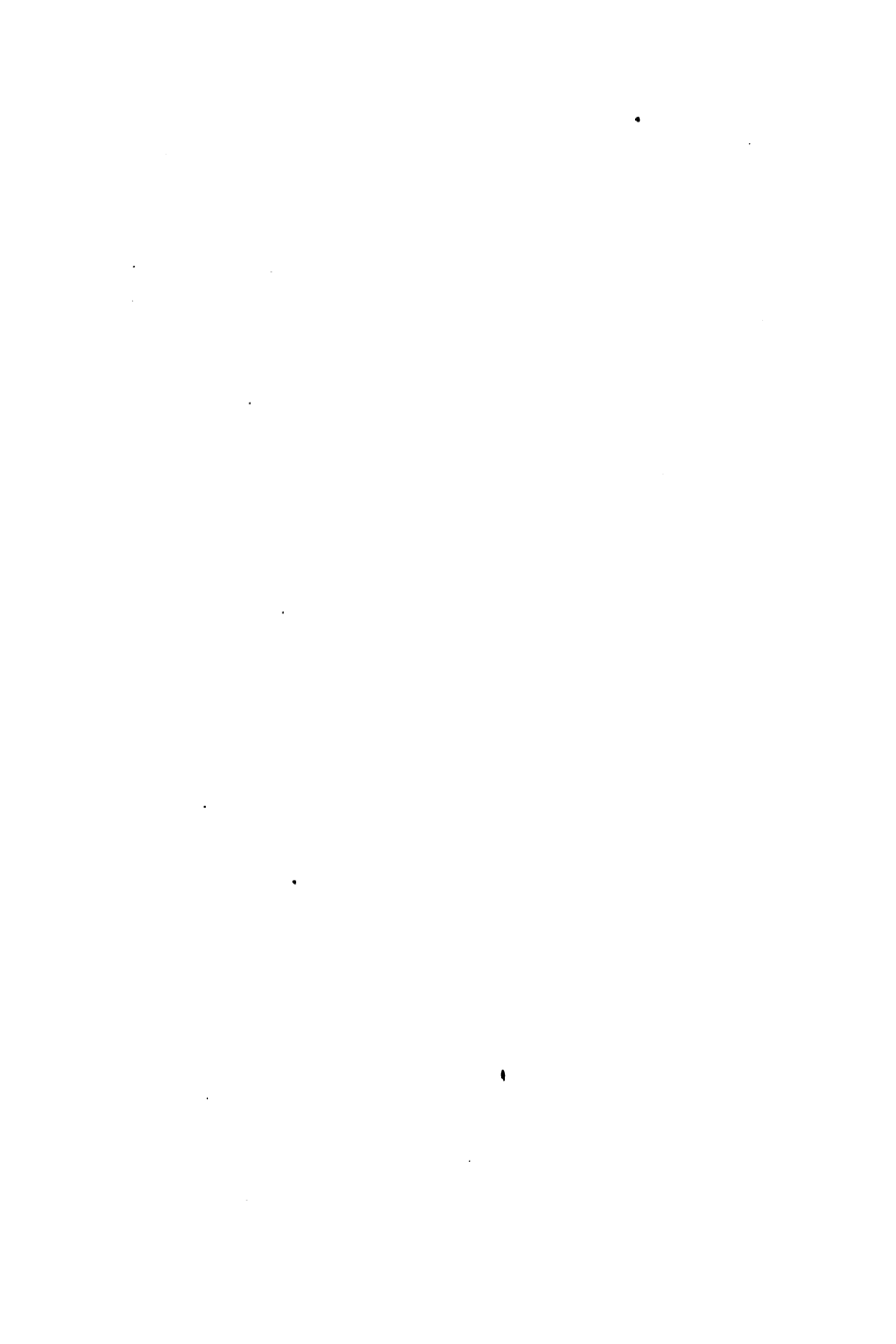
“ And why not ? But I am sick of it ; of every thing Irish ; the people — the potatoes — the

country ; which, from my soul, I wish were a thousand fathoms in the abyss, so that leviathan might choose her brine-washed valleys as the place of his repose ! ”

It was hoped, however, that one might be excused for taking an interest in the land of one's nativity ; in feelings, ways of thinking, unintelligible, perchance, in the high-pressure, albeit narrow, atmosphere of London : for retorting indignant disclaimer to endless falsifications and confident mistatements ; and for registering a voice of intensest sympathy in favour of a despoiled, neglected, and ill-used people, whose destitution, the result of revolting omission and long-accumulating wrong, calls to all the gates of heaven for redress ; and whose blood, for blood it is, whether shed by the sword, or famine-drained, must otherwise, soon or late, bring down the vengeance of God on the oppressor !

P R E F A C E.

THIS sees the light with the earnest, single hope, that it may conciliate prejudice, disarm opposition, and peradventure, were it in a single instance, advance the temporal and eternal interests of mankind.



EXORDIUM.

MYSELF. Say, friendly Daïmon, shall I publish this or no?

DAÏMON. Why ask : breathes it not a tender interest in man ?

MYSELF. But man asks it not. Who cares for the spirit, or its concerns ?

DAÏMON. Is it not better than convulsive romance — pandering to appetite, folly, fear ?

MYSELF. But man loves what is of earth — earthly ; not what is of the spirit — spiritual.

DAÏMON. Appeal, then, to his better part, thou heart so full of care.

MYSELF. But he will not hearken.

DAÏMON. Remind him of his immortal portion.

MYSELF. He would laugh me to scorn !

DAÏMON. Declare thy sacred purpose ; the truths that concern all time.

MYSELF. Are there not books enow—do not myriads ply the spirit's calling? Oh, thou guiding immortal principle, say, do they earn their hire ?

DAÏMON. It matters not. A duty omitted, perchance performed, by others, absolves thee not.

MYSELF. Then be it so.

INTRODUCTION.

I AM a doctor. I live in a village on the remote western coast of Ireland, but have travelled somewhat in my time. Having served my country in the humble capacity of surgeon to a ship of war, I enjoy a pension, which, if small, maintains a cheerful log upon my hearth, with viands warm and wholesome on my table. I dabble in matters of philology and antiquity picked up in my rambles. If the weather be fine, a rod and gun beguile the way to my poor patients, whom, in this sequestered region, I am happy to serve without a fee.

The scenery around me, I believe, is accounted fine; and during the season tourists drop in to

admire, perchance to sketch, the lofty headlands. For my part, I prefer indoor nature, having already witnessed enough of her ladyship's outward adornments.

I contrive leisure to hammer some classics into the head of a wild youth, my sister's son, and a greater adept at pulling an oar or a trigger than at learning. But he is a good lad withal; and I intend, if spared, that he shall "walk the hospitals," trusting, through favour of old commanders, coupled with my own long services, to procure him an appointment in one of Her Majesty's cruizers.

Somehow, salmon, various game, deer even, with tobacco, brandy, and foreign wines, find their way into my little abode. My fellow, Joe, a disabled marine, whose life I once saved, avers with a wink,—the familiarity of an old servant,—that they come from the fairies. I fancy, however, though I never see it done, that my patients

are at the bottom of it: indeed their gratitude knows no bounds. "It is scandalous of a queen's officer," I say, and vainly try to frown it down, for I cannot well throw these free gifts into the sea. Besides, when I come in cold and wet a-nights, after visiting some poor creature on the hills, I find slippers and a change close by my study fire. The winds may howl, the waves may roar without, but the bogwood blazes not the less cheerily within; and Joe insists so on it, that a tumbler of brandy-and-water in the old corner will do me good, that I have not the heart to refuse.

The coast-guard captain, and maybe the gauger and supervisor, look in of an evening. They ask where I get my liquors, and swear they will deal at the same shop. I might be embarrassed for a reply, did they wait for one; but they proceed without a moment's delay to enjoy themselves as though they might never do so again.

When the rector and curate go their rounds they do me the honour to abide under my roof, and I am favoured with frequent calls from the Presbyterian minister and the priest. The "doctor's," though I say it, is a home house with them all: the attachment, in truth, is mutual; for rich and poor, high and low, lean to me alike. And why not? If plenty without profusion, hospitality devoid of ostentation, and moderation in all things, fail to conciliate esteem, I know not what is to do it. Some tinge of melancholy shoots across my old heart when I think of it; but the "doctor" will be missed when he is called away.

I plead the garrulous privilege of my age. I am talking too much, and I know it; but there were matters to relate that needed this little introduction. And anent the priest, every one is aware that the subordinates of the Romish church are moved about at will; so the gentleman speak-

ing of the curate, whom I was accustomed to see, had been replaced by another.

“How happens it, Joe,” said I, “that the priest never comes here now? Step over, will you, and give my compliments, the doctor’s compliments, and say how happy I should be to see him at dinner.” The invitation was courteously declined; but my new friend called soon after, as it might be to thank me himself. Fancy a thin spare man, well ‘past forty, but looking older than he was, haggard and meagre to a degree, and wearing masses of coal-black hair here and there shot with grey. His dark eyes, though piercing and restless, were tempered by an expression of infinite melancholy. They evinced a peculiarity which I had never witnessed before, becoming at intervals suddenly fixed, as if the attention were turned to sights and sounds about to be present, but which, fading away, gave rise to disappointment, if not despair.

He opened the conversation with compliments, I need not repeat, as to my services, which he was pleased to observe were invaluable among the poor. "It would have delighted me," he said, "to avail myself of your kindness ; but I am a worn-out recluse, who only leave my cell to perform the needful offices of my cloth. Indeed, doctor," he added, "I am a subject for your skill as much as any other one — being, if not much mistaken, far gone in decline, and not expecting to see another spring." In effect, he shortly after took to his bed, and was no longer able to attend to his parishioners.

I often visited him, and ever found him unaffectedly cheerful, though swiftly-striding death was staring him in the face. It was a pleasure to administer to his requirements, in which I was zealously aided by the kind-hearted Joe. "By my faith," he exclaimed "he is more an angel than a man!" And so indeed it seemed.

He expressed a very superfluous gratitude for my attentions ; and I saw, with regret, that my gentle patient should shortly need them no more. I was therefore not surprised, coming late one night from the hills, to find a message awaiting me, to the effect that Father Michael was much indisposed, and would be thankful for an early call.

A smile was on his lips, though the death-struggle had begun : but there was nothing terrible—I had almost said sad—about it. “You will perceive,” said he, with considerable effort, “my good doctor, that this little business is well-nigh over. After all, what is the life of man? Each one looks at it, and truly, as of infinite moment to himself ; yet in the eye of nature, what though lives were to drop like summer rain ! But I must not trespass on your precious time—I can very well die alone.” Then handing me a manuscript from under

his pillow,—“Here,” said he, “you will find some things relating to one whom you have so acceptably served. Please take this ring—I wear the diamond still—nay, it is a dying man that asks. I might have choice as to a place of rest; but any quiet spot among the hills or along the shore will suffice. Thrice thanks, then, kind doctor,—and now, farewell!”


Here he turned his face to the wall; and, save that I heard, or thought I heard, the names of some who are mentioned in the following narrative, he never uttered word more.

I did not go away, however, but sat quietly on, while thoughts appropriate to the solemn occasion kept thronging on my mind. At last, noiselessly rising, I bent over the bed; but already the spirit was fled, leaving the same sweet expression on the countenance it had worn in life. I left the room with the

involuntary precaution one uses towards the gentle dead. "There," said I, as I softly closed the door—"there lies the mortal residue of a good and pious man!" But it was not till I found myself at home, my singular gifts before me, that I was able to divest myself of a certain choking sensation which assailed me, I knew not well how or why.

There now ensued a sickly time among the hills; and it was long ere I had leisure to accompany my nephew to the great city for the purpose of initiating him into the first mysteries of his profession. This at length accomplished, I proceeded to spend my leisure at the house of an old friend. We had gathered round a blazing sea-coal fire; and that famous contrivance, a dumb-waiter, spared us the infliction of servants.

In the course of conversation I came to relate the incidents already detailed.



“Did you never think of bringing it out?” said a little man, with rubicund visage and double chin, an eminent publisher in the city.

“Bringing what out?” it was now my turn, somewhat surprised, to exclaim.

“Why, ‘The Irish Priest,’” rejoined the publisher.

“Never,” replied I: “‘No Irish,’ you know, ‘need apply.’” *

“Pooh, pooh,” cried the little man; “send it me, and I shall see what I can do. And, doctor, will you just jot down some of those matters you have been telling us about?”

I did so. And now, thou precious reader, the very soul of him who traced these lines accosts thee from the page!

* Νῶ Ὀϊρισχ νεεῖ ἀππλοῖ. Sic Pind. in Schol.

THE
IRISH PRIEST.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

My first recollections are those of a busy, bustling community, in which my immediate relatives and some domestic animals performed their part. To creep out in morning's prime, to listen to the birds' song, to feel the wind on my cheek or amid my clustering hair, were among the greatest, as they were the earliest, of my enjoyments.

My father's humble means sufficed ; we had enough —albeit none to spare. Potatoes, with the occasional relish of salted fish or bacon, constituted our simple fare.

Infancy, youth, flitted past as in a dream. My father worked hard out, when work was to be had ; household matters kept my mother busy indoors. Thus left to myself, I played all day ; and at night crept to my little couch, soon unconscious of all save night's sweet transition into day !

But this could not last for ever. Work fell off : my father grew old, and nothing had been saved. One by one, my brothers disappeared. Some went abroad ; others took employment nearer home, till they could compass a spot of their own, and pass life in the same rude transitions as their predecessors.

I alone remained, save Marion, the adopted one ! Sweet Marion, thy image comes before me after many years, as the flower that blooms in June !

Full oft we coursed the river side, chasing the butterfly and yellow bee, or gathering plants

that hung beyond the brink. Anon, we sat amid the hay, pulled honeysuckle and meadow-sweet, peeped at the tinted eggs, or mocked the bird that comes in spring.

We wondered what made the bean so sweet, and imparted fragrance to the flower on the wall. We gazed at the stars so radiant in the sky ; and thought in our innocence they were lights held out by angels to cheer the children of men !

Sometimes we hied to the shore, and watched the billows as they thrashed the strand, or churned at the foot of some unyielding rock. But when the elements were still, we looked at the declining sun, whose red rays tinged the glorious cloud-palaces where spirits seemed to stray. There was music too in our souls, though we never heard anthem, or harp, or lute : but we were aware of many a carolling melody from pleasant mead or fitful stream !

FATHER DUIGENAN.

"A PLEASANT morning, to you," said Father Duigenan, as he one day crossed our threshold. "And what do you propose with this great boy, who should be earning bread?"

"We know not," replied my parents. "He is the youngest — the last; and we did not like to put him to the door."

"Yet by-and-by," resumed the Father, "God will require your souls; then what is to become of your boy? If you have thought of nothing, what say you to the Church?"

He showed how easily it might be done. He should prepare me himself, he said; and, backed by his influence and instructions, I could enter the great seminary with credit and satisfaction to my friends.

Next day I repaired to the worthy priest.

“Already,” he observed, you can read and write ; and now have only to make diligent use of these treasures” — handing down, as he spoke, well-worn copies of the ancient classics.

I had the happy consciousness of efforts satisfied without constraint—objects realized without the semblance of a task. Every difficulty was smoothed in the presence, and if needs were, with the assistance, of my instructor. Often in after-life, when I witnessed the torture, the bullyings, and the strife, all to compass a little learning at the cost of infinite heart-burnings and time never to be recalled, I have thought on my wise and gentle teacher, and wished — vainly wished, that others had resembled him.

MARION.

MARION ere long inquired as to my destination. I told her I was to be a priest, a servant of God. She listened with mute emotion, then exclaimed : " I shall be with you and help you always."

" That, dearest, you cannot be ; but there are those whom you might join."

" You speak of the good nuns," she said ; " but would they have a poor child like me?"

" You too, dear Marion ; are you not of those of whom Christ has said : ' Suffer them to come unto me, for they are of heaven.'"

Tears gushed from her eyes. She kissed my cheeks, my hair ; then throwing her arms around me, whispered : " Brother, Michael, I should like it well. Sometimes I see the Virgin in my dreams, borne on clouds as we see them at the setting of the sun ; and she sings sweet lullabies

that run through my veins ; and when I waken, it is with tears of joy. And, Michael, my mother comes to me—my little sister ; and they tell me of angel children that play among flowers that do not wither—fountains that never run dry. And I am not afraid, Michael ; for why—it was my mother—my sister that died so young.”

Nothing would satisfy the child but that I should teach her all I knew ; and it was sweet as we lay on sunny banks where fox-gloves bloomed and ragworts waved, to hear her rehearse the immortal lays of Greece and Rome, which she even repeated in her sleep. Many a question did she address on subjects which I was ill-fitted to resolve. “ ’Tis true,” she said, “ I am but a child, yet I think of the time that had no beginning—the space that never ends.”

There she sat gazing on the sky, her flaxen hair streaming down her shoulders ; for pale and thin was Marion, sparing her raiment, and scant

her daily fare. Yet love and blessed hope animated those heaven-illuminated features—beamed from those azure eyes ! I see her yet, reclining by the spring, twining the wild rose and honey-suckle in her hair ; and it was — “ Michael, brother, is it you,” as she hung on my arm, or chased bird or insect in many a sportive turn.

Multitudes sought Father Duigenan’s spiritual aid ; for who so willing as he to rise at midnight call — to watch with the sufferer, pray with the sinner alike. “ Alas ! ” he would say, “ why peril your souls in vain processions, idle holydays, relics of the dead ? The only penance is repentance ; the only procession, the procession to heaven ; the only holyday, to keep each day holy ; the only relic, a pious, humble, yet faithful, striving heart ! Help yourselves, and God will help you. I can but point the way : you must follow it.”

And, truly, there was scope for exhortation. The substance was sacrificed to the shadow—the reality to the show. The needful tillage of the soil was neglected in favour of some reputed saint's day : and precious time was squandered at station or holy well—forgetful, or unconscious, that to work is also to pray—to do our duty purest orthodoxy. Pity so much zeal had not a surer mark ! They wot not that God's temple was the living spirit ; and unless that temple were pure, that neither priest, nor prayer, nor so-called sacred environment, could avail.

No one can say under what circumstances heart and soul are destined to expand. The tree of life, perchance, finds sustenance in barrenest soil ! We listened and we learned ; and as our intelligence grew, so did we hold converse on sacred things. Often we spoke of Christ ; how hypocrites, traders in religion, had sworn his life away ; how he died, yet lived again.

And we took each other by the hand ; and, with tears and yearnings, and infinite strivings of soul, vowed to bear the cross of trial, so that, pure and holy, we, too, might be free of the kingdom of God. No waxen tapers burned — no censer swung, nor did ancient hymns roll along vaulted roofs ; but the loftier sky, heaven's own dome, with stars numberless, and voices from the infinite, testified to our sincerity.

“ What think you of fairies, Michael ? I have thought I heard their feet along the green, their voices 'mid the sunny flowers. Yet such creatures could not be in earth or sky. Those who give credence to them, or unto returning spirits, are alike mistaken. No, the soul that sets out for God is never seen of man again ! Let us love, not fear the dead. They are happy away, and in their own country. They wander by sunny slopes—fountains that flow, and flowers that blow, in the paradise of God. There, too,

is my little sister, ever sweet, ever young, and waiting for me. And she will kiss me when she sees me, and call me her darling; show me birds, and precious flowers, and jewels to shine in my hair. O Michael, I feel so happy this night: do not you wish you were an angel with God?"

Now pestilence ran through the land, people loathed all sustenance; strength forsook their limbs, and they grew dark and chill ere they expired.

"God sends health, Michael; he also sends disease; let us take what comes at his hand. But why, oh, why is the baby cut off at its mother's breast—the father struggling for his infant's bread; the sister in the house, the brother in the field—oh, I understand it not."

"It is even so, Marion. God appoints the how and the when. But I have read that after pestilence, people came to replace those that

had been swept away, and that each disease had its remedy ; for He would not permit us all to perish, were it even to take us to himself."

I was not afraid, Marion was not afraid, to die ; but if it must be so, we hoped that it might be together. So we kissed on this pledge, and parted.

But in the still dark night, a mother wept her child, her Marion !

" O mother, weep not so for me, I shall soon, soon be well !"

I ran, grief and despair gnawing at my heart, to seek the minister of health. Even as I implored, he turned his jaded beast, and with a speed that ill agreed with my impatience, we arrived at last. Marion breathed—no more. Feeble, faint, expiring, no aid could stay the current of disease, or arrest the chill cold hand of death.

“ Michael, brother, is it you—I longed to see you once again ; for you see, dear, I am going to die.”

I could not speak, there was a choking at my heart ; I staggered, and, faint with running, fell.

“ Do not sorrow so for me, darling ; I shall keep my promise by you, and your soul shall not fly so fast heaven-ward, that I shall not be there to welcome it. You will not forget the little birds that sang to us by the green, the wild flowers ; they were all I had, Michael, and they were for you. Mother, kiss me, for I was your child—father, bid your Marion farewell, she will climb your knee no more ! You are growing old, father, and I not by. Who will help you when your daughter—for you called me your daughter—is gone ? Farewell, dear Michael, brother dear, farewell ; you will bear me over the river no more. Do you remember the words of the old

blind man you taught me coming from the school? —

‘ As leaves are begotten, so indeed are men ;
Some the wind bears along the ground,
While the budding-wood, as in spring, produces more ;
Such is the lot of man, one is born, another dies !’

“ And now, the Holy Mother says—‘ Come ;’ and the baby at her breast says—‘ Come ;’ and my little sister says — ‘ Come ;’ and God himself calls me— I come, oh ! I come.” And thus the precious child sank into unconsciousness. She never spoke word more ; but passed with such smile as the malady permitted, from a world so rich and yet so full of care, into that spiritual world for which so many bright gifts prepared her.

Nor silk nor satin shrouded her limbs—
no cap thrall'd her yellow hair ! What matter,
that body had shrined a loving heart—an angel
soul.

We laid her beneath the turf, beside a grassy

knoll. The wild flowers she so greatly loved, came thick upon her tomb; and a clustering woodbine made semblance to clasp a moss-grown stone, on which was rudely graven the name of

MARION.

Here, when summer winds blew soft and warm, and the song of birds came wafted on the breeze, have I sat far on in the night, and heard, or fancied I heard, a voice — one, alas, for ever stilled — call “Brother.” Then, through tears, have I gazed upon the stars, and knew that she was there. Wise and gentle Marion, fare thee well! Didst bloom and fade unseen; but there are those who shall recal thee, while eyes can see, or hearts cherish fond remembrance.

THE PROPRIETOR.

Not far from our habitation was the abode of an extensive landed proprietor. I knew him not, for he never darkened our door ; but I had seen him roll past in his chariot, or ride on the highway. We could not well have less communion had we been inhabitants of different spheres. Indeed, beyond his own family, the protestant rector, his agent, and sometimes officers from the garrison, his associates were few.

The rector, a hired servant of Christ, had slight scope for his ministry. It was but seemly he should sometimes meet the parish priest, a worker, like himself, in the great field of human regeneration ; but it was far otherwise. I am not aware that they ever exchanged words. One would not descend, the other did not care

to aspire ; so each, with mutual estrangement, trod the same well-beaten path to the tomb.

The children of the proprietor were rarely seen beyond the precincts, unless when, in a carriage, they accompanied their mother on visits to the distant gentry, or set off for their winter residence in the city. Happy smiling innocents, all unconscious of distinction between man and man ! By and by, thought I, you will become staid, reserved ; and, it may be, look on God's creatures, breathing the same air, born in the same land, and bound for one common home beyond the grave, as beings of a different race.

THE YOUNG MASTER.

AMONG the young people was one verging on manhood, in whom was well displayed the ingenuousness so desirable in youth. He rode, followed by a servant, oftener, however,

alone, over the surrounding country. I sometimes met him with dog and gun in search of game. On these occasions he would step into the houses of the peasantry, ask for a draught of milk or water, chat with the inmates, play with the children, and depart as he came, with a laugh or a smile.

One day, it so fell out, I entered a cabin by the hill-side just as the young master left it, and took part in the following discourse.

“And so, Michael, darling, you saw him; he went out just as you came in.”

“I saw him,” was the reply.

“The Virgin be over us,” continued the woman, “and such a nice young boy!”

“What pity—heretic cub, spawn of Luther, already damned, or shortly to be,” growled the man. And here he crossed himself while the woman sighed.

“But you do not really think, do not mean to

say, that one after God's image, so young, so innocent, shall incur this fearful doom?"

"Come, now, Michael dear," and the man smiled incredulously, "I suppose you do not know what is before him?"

"As Christian man, or rather boy then, I believe heart and soul, that it is the will and intent, as it is within the power, of Almighty God to save each wandering child of Adam — whether he be of Rome or Geneva, or whether he be neither."

The man gazed sullen, unconvinced; but the woman again sighed, and invoked blessings on my head.

Shortly after I met the young master with rod and gun. "I am not much of a sportsman," he said; "and I dare say you know the haunts of the trout fully better than I do."

I could show him, I replied, "still pools where they leaped after flies, shady banks which

afforded them shelter from the noon-day heat. It reminds me," I observed, as the fishes went and came, "of what one reads in books about the temptations of the world; though here, amid the solitudes, one meets nothing of the kind." The young master seemed pleased with my remark, and passed away.

I sat upon the bank, looking as it were into myself when the youth had gone. I felt as one might feel who, for the first time, had discovered his nakedness. Frieze, old and worn, as well as a world too small, composed my attire; cloth of Saxony, nicely adjusted, his. Shoes of Cordovan covered his feet; brogues protected mine. The fur of the beaver shaded his hair; a leathern cap did this office for me. He wore the finest Holland; I was satisfied with sacking. My hands, face, ankles were brown and weather-beaten; but when he happened to unglove, or the wind deranged his attire, it revealed a surface

fair and soft as that of a girl. Then his accent and address ; but why pursue the comparison—he was a gentleman, and I—I was the rustic I had been born.

Ah me, if I had been rightly told, the proprietor held the very inheritance of my ancestors ; yet I envied him not. I acknowledged, indeed, the significance of a fair exterior : was not the green earth, with its garniture of flowers, preferable to the arid soil—the naked rock ? After all, the outside was not the man ; and nothing, I felt, could forego the needful culture of the soul.

MURDER.

I WAS returning from the house of my preceptor, and had struck into a path through the fields. Scarcely had I forced myself through a growth of young timber, ere I was aware of the short quick bark of a dog, mingled with smo-

thered imprecations. A sense of coming evil urged me in the direction of the sounds.

“Come, it will be over in a minute: damn you, turn your head away! Yes, or no? I have no time to wait.”

An instant, and I was on the spot. The young master, pale, dishevelled, yet unfaltering in voice and mien, confronted a fellow, who with levelled blunderbuss was apparently in the act of blowing out his brains.

“What have I done?” vainly adjured the youth; “down, Cæsar, down.” Then his thoughts reverting homewards, he exclaimed, “My mother! O my mother!”

“You never harmed me,” hoarsely bawled the murderer; “but your father will not renew the lease. I cannot reach him, at least just now, but I have you; and if you do not turn your face this blessed minute, by the Holy” —

“Hold, villain — devil!” — I shouted at the

utmost pitch of my voice ; “you harm him not ; no—not one hair of his precious head !” and I clasped him in my arms.

“How now, Michael, boy,” exclaimed a second ruffian ; “you here ! Our trade is vengeance—is blood ; yours, prayers and paternosters : away !”

“No, by the Lord of heaven I do not stir ! Lift but so much as a finger against him, and the sun does not go down ere I hound the dogs of justice on you, and the law has you in its iron fangs.”

“Damnation” iterated the first speaker, “let us do for them both.”

“Touch him, touch me, at your peril ; there are those who will track your bloody footsteps home, when all the powers of hell shall not save you from destruction !”

I spoke in utter fearlessness, and they quailed in their souls : they might have taken my life, indeed ; but they had known me from infancy,

and were perhaps unwilling to injure "little Michael." Once they wavered, victory, I knew, was ours.

"Come away," said the man who stood aside; "let him alone for this once; and Michael, do you hear, do not cross us again!"

"I will cross you," I exclaimed, "as long as the Almighty gives me power."

The man with the blunderbuss muttered, and again levelled his piece; but the other threw up his arm, and dragged him away. I at once proceeded to undo the collar of the young master, who, overcome by conflicting emotions, was clinging to a tree.

"Michael," for such it seems is your name, "I am Cornelius; from this day let us be friends."

We soon reached the great house. Silken tissues hung from the walls, costly carpets decked the floors. A lady of noble bearing received her son. A mother's searching eye was

not to be deceived, and eager multiplied inquiries elicited the truth : Cornelius told it all.

“ And there,” said he, “ stands my deliverer.” For a moment she was pale and motionless ; then followed caresses, wild and numberless, lavished on her child ! A repast was laid : I partook of dainty wines and sumptuous fare.

The proprietor entered ; his acknowledgments were brief : “ Cornelia, you should not suffer this boy to wander so ; see what has come of it.”

“ Permit me, sir,” I exclaimed ; “ I shall answer for his safety with my own.”

I was in a position to yield assurance : they took me at my word. I went and came at pleasure. Cornelius called, or, when my studies were completed, I waited on him. He was indeed a youth of rare intelligence ; pity there had been any barrier to the recognition of his ample worth. As for the would-be murderers, as too often happens, they were no where to be found.

THE NIGHT-ATTACK.

“It will surprise you, Michael, when I tell that you are the first, and only Catholic I ever knew. My tutor, our visitors even, nay, our very servants, are of the one exclusive creed; with you, Michael, I have entire unreserve: how comes it, then, professing a common faith, that there should be so complete a severance?”

So far as I knew I enumerated the political disabilities and social oppressions under which we had laboured; the cruel reiterated confiscations, involving all, or nearly all, the property of the land; with the enmity naturally and inevitably accruing, on the part of the oppressed towards the oppressor—of the oppressor towards the oppressed.

“Should I ever come to have influence, Michael, I shall remedy all that. You will advise and assist me; and the homes of at

least a portion of the Irish people shall bloom and flourish like the rose."

It was a dark and moonless night, and my foot fell lightly on the way-side turf. I had but reached the walls of a ruined chapel, when my attention was arrested by a low yet distinct whistle. Lurking figures advanced and retired. Approaching a little nearer, I was aware of a dozen men, who sat or lay about a flickering bog-wood fire. The proprietor had dispossessed some tenants of their holdings: he should never do so again! It was at some risk, for they spoke in low and smothered tones, that I collected that the great house was to be fired at dead of night, and its inmates—day and date and all were given—put to the sword. It was enough. I shrunk into the obscurity out of which I had emerged, and next morning informed the proprietor of his impending fate. Whatever his faults, cowardice was not of

the number ; and he awaited the event with inflexible determination.

The hour approached : every preparation had been made. Wickets were constructed in the iron shutters. Vats, at once to annoy the besiegers, and guard against fire, stood brimful on every floor. Well crammed blunderbusses lay upon benches, loaded muskets ranged along the wall. Cornelia and the young people the while, were sheltered in the cellars.

About midnight dark forms shot past the trees, portentous noises invaded the silence of the night. Finally, a crowd of men, with stunning execrations, discharged a volley, bringing down the panes with tingling crash. A simultaneous rush was now made against the doors, which withstood the shock !

The pealing echoes had scarcely ceased ere the wickets were thrust aside, and destruc-

tion was scattered among the hooting crew. With yells of rage and pain the fallen were dragged aside, while the rest sought shelter behind the trees.

A somewhat anxious interval now ensued. It was uncertain whether the besiegers would adventure afresh or retire. Soon, however, sheaves of straw and piles of blazing brush, were assiduously thrust forward. Buckets, emptied from above, somewhat abated the vigour of the flames ; but this dangerous service entailed a degree of exposure of which the assailants were not slow to avail themselves.

The night wore on, but tedious was the progress of destruction. It was, therefore, proposed and carried by acclamation, to batter in the entrance by means of a recently felled tree which happened to lie about. While some proceeded with this, others stood with

levelled pieces ready to discharge the deadly contents against any one who should interrupt the work.

It was but too evident that the door though iron-bound and clenched, must yield at last! It creaked and groaned beneath the ponderous blows, while the house itself reverberated from top to bottom. On the critical position of the inmates it was frightful to think. The proprietor's resources, however, were not exhausted. Barrels filled with sand and clay were piled across the hall, while between this barrier and the door, casks of powder lay in grim repose. An infliction, hardly less fearful than that which they contemplated, awaited the assailants. The misguided men in fancied security urged each other on, and but redoubled their rage and violence as bolt and bar gave way.

It was done! With one fell stroke the now frail structure was no more, and the assailants rushing

forward completely filled the aperture. But the crisis had been foreseen, a pealing voice cried, "now." A lurid flash was seen, a bellowing report was heard, the mansion quivered, and all was still. Twenty human beings had passed into the eternity into which they were so ruthlessly about to thrust others, and the remaining few, destruction at their heels, fled in wild dismay.

It was morn when I approached. Already soldiers, with magistrates and police, attracted by the firing, and more especially the thunder of the explosion, came pouring in. Every one set to work, and in a space of time incredibly short, almost every trace of that wild night had disappeared.

SPIRITUALITIES.

THE people evinced no jealousy touching my intimacy at the great house. Aware of my destination, they doubtless looked on it as so much quartering on the enemy. Who knew — I might work some change. It occasioned therefore, no surprise when I appeared in decent attire, with a sum of money, the gift of my patrons; a slender token, they were pleased to observe, of gratitude that could make no return.

In process of time I felt that I came to partake of the manners and the address of those around. Doubtless, I was deficient in the courtesies characteristic of refined intercourse; but my life had been too much one of introspection, to render me justly chargeable with vulgarity or assurance. Cornelia treated me as a son. Even the austere proprietor relaxed in my presence, while the

younger Cornelia displayed the outpourings of her impulsive heart, by every gentle demonstration in her power.

“ Think you,” said Cornelius, “ that denizens of the spiritual world are aware of our existence ; that they take charge of our welfare, or try to alter the current of our lives ? ”

“ To their pervasive vision,” I replied, “ our condition cannot be unknown ; but it is with an interest modified by the loftier views and intuitions of eternity. I do not believe that they possess any power, whether for good or for ill. That lies with God, and with God alone. If the dead have no influence over our position, most assuredly we have none over theirs. We may hope, wish, implore ; but must not the less submit to the will of the Most High. Spiritual despotism, whether it affect to control us here or hereafter, is about the worst of the unhappy privileges which vain man would assume in

relation to his fellows. Pour the balm of consolation into the spirits of the sorely tried, the souls of the heart-broken ; but dictate not. O thou who wouldst so much instruct others, first instruct thyself—who made thee mediator between God and man ?”

We spoke largely of the infirmity that perpetuates a dictator between one’s conscience and one’s God. . We even thought the time perchance might come, when man should need no interpreter before the throne of grace, no spiritual advocate to plead his cause, and lay down to a fraction the costs of salvation.

It has been said the labourer is worthy of his hire, but what is the hire of the spirit ? Is it filthy lucre—sordid gain ? Say rather, is it not the glorious consciousness of a duty that has been performed—of a task that has been done—the kindling of holy desires—of an infinite expectancy, in the souls of men ? How are those who

are brought up to religion as a trade, to be, of necessity, endowed with that sacred call—the yearnings, the aspirings that nothing short of progression can appease, and then only by giving rise to fresh longings and more extended aspirations? Can such feel ever and only desirous of turning hearts from self—from considerations of time to those of eternity—from the business of the body to that of the spirit—from the world that is, to that which is to come?

Let it be felt that all have equal claims on God's sacred truth. Let it no longer be expedient to perpetuate ignorance, destitution, and despair. Let the lowliest be cared for even as the offspring of princes; and each immortal soul nurtured with outpourings of infinite love. Let it be shown that earth is our abode but for a time; and that we have, not beyond the remote skies merely, but immediately around us, as well as throughout infinity, another and a better

home with God and precious spirits created of God—lords of space, denizens of eternity !

This so impulsive earnestness caused our hearts to thrill for joy, our eyes to fill with tears. We affected no monopoly—arrogated no exclusiveness. We had but expressed ourselves on subjects on which it is the right of all to expatiate. If we erred, God would pardon that involuntary error.

DUBIETIES.

THE period during which I might commune with Cornelius was drawing to a close ; he had to repair to Trinity, while I looked forward to Maynooth. We conversed much on our individual destinations, as on the general complexion of Irish life. We were astonished at the long array of crime—periods during which people only seemed to live amid war and violence. We

called to mind, however, that such was also the condition of the times, and that the events we deplored might have worn a different aspect to those engaged in them. There must have been intervals of peace, else literature and the arts, nay, life itself, must have ceased to be.

Cornelius was of opinion that the priesthood might devote a portion of time to the diffusion of knowledge, and the inculcation of principles of reason and morality. To them it could prove no disparagement; nay, rather, it would enlarge their thoughts, extend their usefulness, and prevent that continual straining after mere dogmatic theology, which, all must admit, is not the most important, much less the only, branch of human inquiry.

“Unhappily,” said he, “the clergy, at least those of your communion, are too much dissociated from human ties. Celibacy, that cruel device, however it may have subserved the

policy of Rome, neither identifies the people with the priest, nor the priest with the people. Sad is the alternative, were it but in a single instance, of remediless obligation or secret sin. How greatly are they to be compassionated who groan under a tie that death alone can loosen — whose souls are the battle-ground of a combat never ending, always beginning !”

We were to proceed on the morrow. I sat late with my parents. Their hearts were sore ; but they exulted in the prospect that one day I should return a healer of souls. All my powers, they thought, were cheaply embarked to ensure a consummation so desirable. What, indeed, were life or sacrifice, so I bore the honoured name of Father. They wot not of drudgery in the pursuit of a knowledge that is not knowledge—vain and narrow dialectics that shrivel up the soul ! They gave no heed to the violation of rights that God had given, and which no man was entitled to take away.

Yet was there an alternative: I might be a peasant still! What, if generation through generation seen dimly back, my fore-fathers owned the soil their descendants tilled, it bootied not: my zeal for knowledge, my ambition, if it must be so, was too insatiate to suffer me to remain as I was born. To be a priest, indeed, was not my vocation — was not the vocation of a man — but it was all that lay open to me; and in due time I became one, became what I am.

THE DREAM.

It was past cock-crow, and the stars began to decline as my father gave me his last embrace, and the tears of my aged mother fell fast on the cheek she kissed. Their failing feet dragged heavily on the earthen floor as they retired to a broken rest. I paused by the embers of a decaying turf-fire, which, dimly smouldering,

cast faint gleams round the humble apartment. I thought over my past career, pondered that which was to come. My secluded life, the fewness of my associates, my intended destination, and early intellectual culture, had driven me into myself—created a world within the breast, to which I was constantly resorting for occupation and relief.

I looked out. Worlds above, around, hung countless in the sky; while the multitudinous firmaments that make up the star-stream, glittered gorgeously amid the ether !

Insensibly I found myself outside our dwelling, and had closed the lowly door. Here and there mists filled the hollow of the valley or languidly rolled along the level ground. The odour of hay, for it was spring, came sweetly on the sense; the rail repeated its monotonous chant, and now and then was heard, as one hears on summer nights, the gentle call of the cuckoo.

I was in no humour for repose, so step followed step, and foot-fall foot-fall, along the stony yet grass-bordered causeway that led among the hills. At length I found myself beside a ruined arch and ivied wall. Those emerald-green, arrowy leaves so beautiful, so bright, quivered in the breath of the fragrant night. Lowly graves were around. It was the burying-place of the sons and daughters of the soil, who, unless hurried off elsewhere, had there been wont to sleep the great sleep a thousand years or more. Many an exile, when sick or dying, would have forfeited his chance of recovery for the certainty of reposing at last by that old wall.

I sat by Marion's grave, for she too lay there. Already odorous honeysuckle shed sweetest fragrance on the place of her repose. A holy thrill came over me. I was a solitary living

soul — around were the numberless dead — stalwart man and tender woman, feeble infancy and decrepit age hushed quietly together in the clay !

“Where is Marion, where?” pealed forth a voice from the soul’s depths. “Where is she who wandered with me by these grass-grown tombs and crumbling walls?” “Here, Michael, brother, here am I!” Thus would she respond to my quest no more. “Ah, Marion, one word, one only word to the companion of thy infancy ;” but the wind sighed past the ruined walls — faint odours rose wafted from the flowers : the rail repeated a hoarse note, her companion its soft cuckoo.

And now upsprung the voices of the night : piping winds came pealing through the trees ; boughs rose and fell ; the brooks uttered a choral song — and all joined in a hymn to God the Maker !

The dead seemed to rise from their graves and kneel upon that earthly floor ; and Marion, too, was there ; and many a maiden and many a youth, long buried in the tomb, united with lifted hands, as in vesture of clay they besought the Mighty Father, that he would assoil them of their sins and send them once more, thus purified and renewed, to run a bright career throughout eternity. I felt no fear ; why should I ? Sisters, brothers, were with me — looked at me with tender, loving eyes, as though they would declare,—“And thou, too, art one of us !”

I know not how long I slept, but my head had rested on Marion’s grave, and my hair was wet with dew. The morning’s sun shone bright and warm ; the larks sang merrily, and a yellow-hammer on an elder tree poured forth its soul in many a dying fall.

Returning home, the table was already spread. I made a slender repast, and tears stood in our

eyes, as with fond embrace and blessings from heart's depths, we said our last farewell.

MAYNOOTH.

WHEN I entered the famous seminary, the teachers were struck by a proficiency so unusual. "A man in converse," they said, "a boy in years." I knew nothing, indeed, of the "*Institutiones Philosophicæ*" of Anglade ; but I had read a little in the book of human nature, and of human life. A fragmentary knowledge of English, and knowledge still more fragmentary of the ancient classics, was all that was expected, probably because it was all that could be realised. To these rude acquirements were now to be added a little scholastic logic, a course of barren divinity, and some faint inklings of natural science. It was doing the young men scant justice in the first instance and in the last ; it was but poorly

qualifying them for the influence they were to exercise, and the posts they were to fill. The world, its errors and its excellences, were alike excluded. Associates they had none, beyond those as incult as themselves ; or teachers who for the most part had run the same career.

Better, in truth, their books had been closed ; better they had remained illiterate as the clod, even as the fishers and sail-makers of Christ ! Better have cast scholastic lore aside ; praying to God on bended knees ; thanking him for the mighty gift of life, and abiding with the soul's devotion by his unalterable law for ever. Better far have braced their loins, and waiting on the sick and dying, comforted the unhappy, ministered to the sorrow-laden. Better even, laying hold of spade and plough, have taught the right culture of the soil, and remaining with the rude peasant, banished unthrift and intemperance. For man, after all, was their theme ; with him

they were to live, to die, to smile, to weep ; he was to be their cross, their care, their condemnation, or their "exceeding great reward."

Far be it from me to disparage books, but only such books ! Those who were to heal the souls and reassure the hearts of men struggling with misery, and the languor of mortal sickness, should be set in a measure to the task at once. They who had the call should be placed apart, while they who had no call should go their way. Yet who more willing than the devoted Irish priest to strive by night, to toil by day, to face disease and death, and to confront, as best he may, the great enemy, the man of sin, in all his countless wiles and disguises. Scant profit hath he—no name, no fame ; but he has that whispered approval which, let a man's conviction be what it may, tells to his secret soul that he has fought the good fight, that his work has been rightly done.

SIMPLE PATRICK.

THE individual who occupied the apartment adjoining mine was a youth from Munster, with soul incult, as the heather on the hill. What he dreaded were creatures of another world; beings who, instead of solacing themselves in the free fields of space, evinced unconquerable predilection for certain haunts, to the confusion and dismay of every beholder. He would not have passed a night alone were it to be made pope of Rome. Oft have I been roused from deepest slumber by yells emitted by poor Patrick in his dreams. "Do you hear, do you see them?" he would exclaim. "Oh, Mother of mercy, save us!" Nor was it easy, so much was he impressed by frantic fancy, to rouse him; and when aroused, it was long indeed ere he regained tranquillity.

Even yet I cannot call to mind without a

shudder his distorted conceptions of the invisible world. Gracious heaven, he and those who resembled him peopled the infinite universe with spectral horrors, as grotesquely remote from the glorious reality, as deformity is remote from beauty, falsehood from truth.

“Patrick,” I have accosted him in the still night, “how has your mind been so fraught with these absurdities?”

“Hush, Michael, hush, you know not who is listening; speak them fairly, Michael, and they will do you no harm.”

“Speak whom, Patrick! What mean you by these crazy wanderings?”

His voice would then assume a character of piteous entreaty, mixed with threats as to what might befall did I not respect the hour and the place. Was I mad? Had not a Dunboyne scholar died in that very room? Father Durlachan, did not he still look in at nights? And

nurse M'Creavy, and Killen the porter, and —— ”

“ Patrick,” said I, interrupting him, “ are you not aware that by the fiat of the Creator, once soul and body sever, the former has no power over its companion—that it enters into new relations, very different from those with perishing matter?” I tried to show him that we had no direct perception of spiritual natures, however the senses might be occasionally imposed on. Were there not irrefragable instances of individuals who saw sights and heard sounds that had no existence save in a perverted imagination? Was it likely that beings who had passed into eternity should so demean themselves, had they the power, as to torment children, feeble-minded persons, and even the inferior animals? If the Deity suffered the immediate visible commerce of men and angels, would it not be for some great and good pur-

plished scholars ; able and willing workers in the regeneration and amelioration of mankind.

Among the rest was Father Moonan. Heedless of the stirring, striving world about him, he lived but in visions of the dim and distant past : yet no one was more earnest in the duties of his post. He would repeat, were it for the hundredth time, the most commonplace passage of the most commonplace author. Dulness must rouse in spite of herself, indolence cast off her leaden wings. He never upbraided in word or deed ; it was only " Well, my dear, you seem unacquainted with this passage, let us try it again ; " and they did try, and again try, till doubts and difficulties were equally dispelled. Youths, alike indifferent to praise or blame, yielded to Father Moonan's irresistible sway. If they could have elicited the faintest impatience, the slightest reproof—but his dignified gentleness withstood every shock. Did I say

there was no swagger, no invective; far from it, every one was treated with sweetest courtesy. For it was a maxim with him that all could learn—wished, in fact, to learn, and would learn too if the right way were taken; and this, it was plain to see, he held to consist in unwearying patience, firmness, and love.

But his daily duties once performed, he was seen no more. Me, indeed, he was pleased to notice, and occasionally invited to the privacy of his chamber. Here, far on in the night, a meagre, ascetic, yet cheerful man, might be seen poring over a volume of the fathers, or some Arabic manuscript brought by him from Spain. He would read awhile, then dashing an arm aloft, exclaim—"Beautiful exceedingly, perfect, just and true: Ruler of heaven and earth, I thank thee for this so clear perception, vouchsafed to the humblest of thy servants." Sometimes morning surprised him midst these reveries,

which contrasted strangely with the even tenor of his daily life.

The ignorant and sensual, and such are every where, neither understood the man nor his harmless though unusual ways. Father Moonan, they said, must have that on his mind which keeps him stirring at dead of night ! He watched, indeed, but it was in accordance with spiritual wants which had little scope during the day ; while they, forgetful or unwitting that this existence is but the portal to a higher, dozed away the hours in emulous obliviousness.

Father Moonan was a Pythagorean, in so far that he lived on the fruits and roots of the earth. His mild grey eyes would beam when pacing the floor or sitting by his frugal table, he averred that princes fared less sumptuously. "I consume," said he, "the blameless produce of the soil : no creature expires in agony that I may feast. The recorded thoughts and aspi-

rations of the noblest, wisest, best, are ready at my call. Supported without excess, a mind ever clear, what were daintiest cates that inflame ere they nourish, in comparison?"

"Thou, Ireland," he would exclaim, while he looked through his casement on the tame though fertile fields of Kildare, "shalt one day shine. Thy plains shall glow with yellow corn; thy sons and daughters shall cast off the fetters of poverty, and the worse fetters of superstition and ignorance. Stand forth, then, once more before the nations—happy, glorious, free. Precious consummation, come quickly, come soon!"

He expatiated on our Hibernia, its unequalled harbours and matchless position, linking the Old World with the New; the genial mildness of the climate, burnt up by no summer's drought, chilled by no winter's cold; together with the quick and versatile genius of its teeming inhabitants. What prevented the just and natural

results? What, but want of prudence, want of patience, and, above all, those infamous broils between professed followers of one common master. "Men, countrymen, be united, true—just to each other, and others will be just to you. Plunge no more the sword of discord into the bosoms of brethren, and the world shall not prevail against you."

DUBLIN.

•
HAVING completed my studies at Maynooth, I proceeded to Dublin, and became an officiating priest in the chapel of St. Cross. In the cure of souls in that great city, I should have all the scope that heart could wish, for the inculcation and practice of principles of universal benevolence. I had never abode in the metropolis before. If its dimensions surprised me, still more did the ever-restless inhabitants. Gaunt

poverty stalked side by side with lordly opulence and splendour. There were palaces replete with luxury, hovels the abode of dreariest misery. Pleasure seemed the rule with those that had the means; vilest sustenance—enough that it kept body and soul together—the exclusive object of the poor. And, gracious heaven, thought I, this has been going on for generations! Every enjoyment was drained to the lees, the revolting lees of exhaustion and bitterness. During the day, keen-eyed, famine-pinched vagrants—at night, swarming courtesans, harlot children—young men in all the savagism of intemperance, uttering yells, or during those they met to rude encounters: homeless wretches cowering in porches, or with piercing intreaty imploring vain charity at the doors!

Day by day an insatiate desire to plumb the depths of human suffering led me through lanes

and alleys, the dim recesses of the Liberties, haunts along the quays, purlieus of ancient churches. Here, dwellings, cellars, that reeked with every polluting abomination : swarms of dirt-stained children—children, O God, that had never heard the birds sing, seen the flowers blow, the brooks leap, or the grass green ! Here, too, I had to learn that there was a deeper misery than that which met the day—a misery that shunned exposure ; and withal, midst this infamous destitution, sacrifices to the dearest charities of life—sacrifices no tongue could tell, no pen recount—sacrifices unheeded, unknown, and that never should be known, till declared by the trump of angels in eternity !

THE SERMON.

I WAS to deliver my first sermon; the lady Cornelia and her sweet daughter were there, the noble Cornelius also. They would honour their friend by being among his auditors.

The text on which I had chosen to dilate, was from John, "A new commandment give I unto you, that you love one another."

Brothers, friends, you hear these words! Ere eighteen hundred years, they fell from holy lips in that beautiful and still unforgotten tongue, and yet so glorious vehicle of immortal truth. Love one another: even so, O Lord! The parent was not to love her child merely; the child, the mother that bore him; brother to love brother; sister, sister; friend, friend; no, each was to love the other; each, all; and all, each. We were to be as brothers, indeed, as dear friends!

Yet, O God, just and merciful! Ye who

pause with me a moment on this perishing earth, how have we sustained this commandment? Do we love the poor indeed, the outcast, — for they too are brethren? Is it to love when we suffer little children, scant of food, shelter, raiment, to herd shivering, wretched, on the highways and byeways of the world? Is it love to tear each other with the iron implements of war—to be as demons of destruction in place of messengers of peace, representatives of the infinite mercies of God?

Does the inmate of yonder gaol know of love; or he who expiates to-morrow a miserable career by a still more miserable close? Does the harlot know of love — she, whose young existence is steeped in impurities, brutalities for which there is no name?

Brothers, there is not enough love. The mercies and charities of existence fall with unequal shower. Ah no, every child must be

cared for, every sufferer comforted, ere we can be said to love. No, we do not sufficiently heed our fellows; our hearts are not steeped in affection's precious dew; we do not act up to the bidding that has been given us — in a word, we do not love!

Of a surety, love affords the highest, best of all impulses. Truly uncalculating, it seeks but the welfare, the unconditional welfare, of its object. It is love, but in no limited, unworthy sense. It is not even the sacred preference of the sexes. It is a boundless, an unsparing regard, submitting to every sacrifice, obeying every call for the sake of the regeneration and salvation of the redeemable soul of man — that seeks the food, not of mortal, but immortal life — not the food which perishes, but that which endures for ever — undying hope, purity infinite, even love eternal!

Let us thrust aside the narrow boundaries of


sect and party; it is humanity we are to honour, not the creed of the hour. We are to love our neighbour as ourselves — that neighbour whether rich or poor, of good report or ill, whatever his calling or profession of faith; for love soars beyond human distinctions, or place or space. It seeks the universal, the infinite; it would help its object over the bridge of time and through the valley of tears, to emerge a denizen at last of blessed eternity.

God of mercy, why do we pause? What is asked of us? Is it gold — our precious, and yet why precious, lives? Can life be fitlier spent than in doing well, in the acquisition of noblest hopes, priceless aspirings? These are the possessions that perish not — for, O friends, brothers, it is not as we live alone, but as we die, that we are to be measured. Let us turn then unto life, to a loftier hope; let us cease to be of the body merely, but of the spirit, for we carry

within us seeds of a rich expectancy, elements of infinite life — a life that makes us akin, not to angels only, but to the immaculate God.

For what is regeneration? To be born again, not as to the body, but the soul. What but fitness for that spiritual life of which the present is the forecast, the imperfect echo, the faint and feeble gleam that precedes the coming dawn? Welcome then, spiritual world, thrice-sacred, enduring eternity! O God, mighty, forgiving, merciful, prepare us for that world; take away these fleshly souls; give us spiritual ones; give us life, the life of life — thy holy, unending peace.

Ah sisters, brothers, we cannot, do not love, unless we abate the lustful heart, the gloating eye. For what — oh, what is required of you — what but your infinite, your enduring welfare? In truth, you have only to open the ready hand, the willing heart, to realise the longing hope, the fond desire. What should we say of one



assailed by direst need, yet refused the golden store which a bountiful benefactor was willing, nay, infinitely desirous to impart? For where is the benefactor like God — where the store that comes up to his gifts — gifts so freely bestowed on rich and poor, old and young, bond and free, which are laid open to the saint, yet not withheld from the sinner?

Holy Ruler, infinite God, who are we whom thou hast so gloriously remembered? Hast dealt by us with no niggard hand, hast put us off with no mean endowment, but a portion, yes, a portion of thy blessed self, thy overflowing spirit, thy eternal love.

Oh, brothers, God hath not so circumscribed us. We are not bound to this scene for ever, or to possessions, rich though they be and rare, of earth and sky. Hath he not granted us jewels of all worlds — of life and death, of space and time? If he have not yielded a lasting heri-

tage here, he hath lavished the fuller measure of hereafter, eternal communion with the wise, the good, the holy, the magnanimous, the true !

But oh, we reach not this sacred term, this ineffable consummation, short of spirits pure and stainless, hearts upright and true. We must not hate a brother, despise a sister, wrong or in any wise betray, were it the humblest remnant of human kind ; for are we not sanctuaries of the living God, which no one may defile ? Truly love is opposed to every evil utterance, degrading impulse, low-born thought, and base desire. Our souls must be as the souls of children — simple, unembarrassed, free. So shall we submit to this pure and elevating affection, in opposition to the empire of sense — in short, unto glorious communion with the angels of God, who love continually, and know not sin.

Were love a possession of time only — did it but link us to wife or child, parent or friend,

infinite were its deservings ; but, Majesty of Heaven, it follows us for ever, and for ever experiences exaltation and expansion !

Do we love the child that has been snatched away, we shall meet that precious child, perchance a beaming seraph, blooming again. No, the bright eye and sunny cheek shall fade no more in eternity ! There, the objects of our so priceless affections, shall flourish and thrive before our enraptured vision for ever. The wife of our bosom shall be there — the young wife so faithful and true ; the good brother, the sister, the friend we loved better than life, the devoted mother, the fond father — never, ah never, mercy of God, to part !

There, blighting poverty shall no longer check the grateful effusions of the heart, no longer lack of means drive sons and daughters from the parental bosom ; but circling and encircled in one bright celestial throng, the loving and

the loved shall meet before the throne of their Maker, in face of the myriads of bright intelligences which it has pleased him to call into existence for ever.

Ah me, what mother cowers in that chill corner, before a hearth that no fire warms? She strains her infant to a bosom wherein the lamp of life burns all too feebly, to foster the lingering, yet perishing vital spark in her attenuated offspring. A faint light throws flickering rays on those pallid, and yet more pallid features. The little lips close all unconsciously; the little fingers play, the head moves to and fro — and, agony of agonies, all is still! That sweetest child shall open eyes no more, no more shall press the breast that would shed heart's blood to nurture it. That stricken face shall respond to no caress: those arms that used to cling so closely now hang for ever loose and motionless!

Hark, what shriek rings through the murky

air, rending the very structure of the ear ? What agonized form sits rocking, anon rolls on that cold soil, rends its garments, tears its hair, will not be comforted ? Mockery of mockeries, where is comfort—where, O God, is comfort in that chill cell ? Who, indeed, shall comfort thee, poor bereft one ? The partner that should sustain, fever hath taken away, and now the infant, the only one, that too is gone.

Look down, ye pitying angels, on this stricken mother ; and God, wilt thou not stanch her tears ? But the stars roll on in majesty ; the moon fills and wanes again, while dusky night turns into cheery day. Take comfort, then, despoiled mother, angels have received, and now foster thy stainless child. Yet weep and mourn the while, pour out the full heart, for grief nurtureth love. In brief space, thee too, sad mother, shall angels bear to that undying child. It shall take thee in its arms and kiss away thy tears,

disperse thy soul's distress and smooth thy troubled brow ; while for ever, and yet for ever, shall it love thee as thou hast loved it, and mother and child shall meet to part no more.

O merciful and compassionate God, love is not the heritage of the rich, the exalted, to the exclusion of the humble, the poor ! Could it be otherwise, where were life—where the sweet charities of existence—the bloom of good fortune, the solace of ill ? The lowliest mother loves her infant not less than mightiest queen her regal son. Were it even the outcast, the spurned-at of human conventionalities can say—"I love my child—my child loves me." And no woman, no mother, who can whisper this to her heart, is utterly forlorn, debased, or self-forgotten. Well it is so ; well there is a chain forged by angel hands, by which the sinner can climb the heights to Mercy's throne. Then utter it not—no soul is wholly lost that loves ! The most polluted,

were it of earth's children, however great, almost infinite the remove, is bound to paradise by adamantine links, by the hope of ages, through the boon of heaven itself.

But who says—not I—that vice is the needful heritage of poverty? Oh, want may press, direst need assail, yet virtues raise their sweetest heads—some rude exterior veiling a heart more radiant than gold—were it among the humblest tenants of the mighty earth.

Thou who hast sheltered the foundling, fed him with milk of human kindness, shielded him from biting blast and nipping cold, angels shall trump thy praise. Many a mother—many an Irish mother—burthened with offspring, eating bread, perchance watered with tears, has taken to her bosom and her home some poor abandoned orphan, and been to it a parent indeed, a mother without stint or stay. Blessings, then, oh blessings be her portion for ever! She dies

poor, but shall awaken rich—saluted by the sons and daughters of God with a jubilant chorus of ceaseless approval through the wide-spread realms of eternity.

It has been said, “love thy neighbour;” but love for others demands nothing low, mean, debasing, selfish; on the contrary, what is exalted, magnanimous, true. And why? To love another is to deny oneself; to be generous to self, a niggard to others: ah, no! Let generosity be shown abroad, self-denial at home. This is the turning-point; we cannot love God or our neighbour, and eat the bread of selfishness.

Is it too much to give up what we were better without, to spare lest another perish? Who would not grasp the ready alternative; who? Alas, too many conceive it not!

Behold yon famine-pinched child, that gaunt father, hollow-cheeked mother—now they cross our path! Who spares, who shares? That

gorgeous equipage would eke out their means for ever, but its listless occupants hold no converse with misery. Sound it, then, in their ears ; ring the knell of pity, were it for a moment, in their souls ; implore the sons and daughters of luxury to bestow one glance on expiring manhood, decaying infancy. Oh merciful heaven, that one should sink in his extremity, while others riot unsparing in excess !

Yes, God is love ! Were we to live the endless ages of eternity we could never exhaust this highest attribute of God and man. God urges us by all the sweet emotions of our souls—by the mute expressive eloquence of nature—the gushing melody, the budding rose, the stars that sweetly shine, the winds that softly blow—then let us yield unto the divine command !

Meanwhile, it may be asked, what is it to do for us—why these enduring sacrifices, these ever fresh departures in our spiritual life, without

hope or prospect of a close? Must we work and strive without stop or stay for ever? What is to be the end of it, where the reward?

Cease, restless souls: require no term to that which has none—no, none, whether in time or eternity! The loftiest mountain human foot hath trod discloses its summit at last; but the circling task for love thus flows, can have no end. Wouldst fathom eternity, or sound infinity as with a plummet? Till then, hope to find no close to an affection boundless as creation, enduring as time.

Listen, brothers; to progress there is no end. What, would ye pause still and motionless, while the hosts of heaven, while regenerate spirits kept thronging by! Thanks to the Infinite, there is neither rest nor pause now, nor at any time, at present, or for ever. The mazy stars, the circling firmaments, the wheeling sun, shall grow hoary and old; but man in his limitless.

career shall be earnest, hopeful, as in his earliest prime. This, then, brothers, is your requital; say, doth it content your souls?

Virtue needs no return beyond itself; here and hereafter, it is its own surpassing reward. Could the blessed Creator even imagine anything sweeter, greater, more perfect, than that virtue should thus repay itself day by day more and more? The lofty sentiment, exalted conception, noble deed, yield more in the very act than it were possible for language to recount or tongue to tell.

Take heart then, sister, brother, in adversity, all shall yet be well. Thou canst not even imagine any thing so good, so great, as the infinitely desirable reality. Weep and sigh no more, for human woe shall sink into nothing before the glorious consummation which our Maker has in store for us. Do not, then, so much strive to get rid of suffering as to realise that happy frame

of mind, emphatically "Heaven, the Kingdom of God:" for to be holy, to act justly and well, of a surety is heaven, whether it relate to this perishable scene or the loftier concerns of eternity.

Christ hath said in words of imperishable truth, — "What shall it avail to gain the whole world and lose one's soul?" What, indeed! Will honours, dignities, consideration, wealth, power, replace the sacred composure, the sweet tranquillity, "Heaven," in a word, "the Kingdom of God?" Oh friends, I say but this, it were a poor exchange; for as lofty mountains tower above the plain, the heavens above the mountains over which they soar, so is the blessed frame of mind here inculcated, so is the peace of God, so is a just self-approval—love to one's Maker, to one's fellows—that love which includes all other excellences, and which one who so far surpassed other men gave as a command,

above all the joys of earth, all the possessions of sense.

May God's infinite peace be with you; and may you retain in your hearts now and for ever the loving-kindness which my humble words have feebly essayed to enforce!

I had done: some composure I needed at first, but as I warmed to the mighty theme I became conscious of no impediment, of no one's presence. Would it could have been urged with an angel's voice, a seraph's tongue: yet beaming looks, and smiles mid tears, bespoke approval; hearts had been touched by the words of the lowly speaker, and ere I left the porch a woman with sunken eye and haggard mien exclaimed: "May the blessing of the Almighty light upon you!" These words I never forgot; they comforted me.

THE CONFESSIONAL.

AMONG my duties was that of listening to penitent sinners in the confessional. To one of unbiassed convictions there could be no occupation more repugnant. Details of reeking depravity, or petty omission, were almost more than I could bear. Some, strange to say, esteemed it worse to go aside in matters of creed or ceremony than in the commission of visible wrong, and evidently expected weightier denunciation in the first case than in the last. What if they had broken a partner's peace, gone riot in debauchery and excess, they never failed—thank God, not they—in weekly fast and solemn festival, had passed over no saint's day, neglected no priestly due, eaten no forbidden meats; in short, had maintained all outward observances. Enough, they secured favourable audience of their spiritual guide; they looked to

no inward change — the contrite heart, the chastened soul — without which priest or penance is of small avail.

Some were oppressed with remorse for offences purely venial; others wretched, having omitted a litany or a prayer. Thoughts perchance the most revolting, were bared with a minuteness that sickened when it failed to appal. Oh that men could so mistake the substance for the shadow, the reality for the show! But there were also saintly creatures, mostly women, who, saving the over-wrought sensibilities of a needlessly anxious and pious nature, knelt before me, sinner that I was, pure and spotless as the angels of light. These, indeed, I comforted with all my might; exhorted to lay aside their fears, to engage heart and soul in the duties of life, with all its crosses and all its cares; that thus God would bless, gently chasten, and one day take them to himself. I trust I did my part by

every wanderer, but penitents like these upraised my flagging spirits. As it was, when the day's dull round was done, I have cast myself on my couch in a passion of tears, bewailing the miserable degradation of my race. I was vowed to receive the heart's confession were it of the humblest of my species; yet who was I that presumed to act as God's vicegerent—God—Creator and Ruler of the universe—only Confessor and Absolver of sins—Redeemer and Saviour of mankind!

A PROFLIGATE.

It was in the course of events that the young Cornelia should grow up, and be surrounded with suitors accordant with her high deserts and Christian worth.

Her father was ambitious; it was much he thought to connect his daughter with some

ancient line, the heir of vast domains. Broad acres, and the more metaphysical illusion of a name, were what he coveted; about the more boundless domain of the soul, the fields of intellect, he neither knew nor cared. •

What he wanted presented itself in an individual who, saving the accident of birth, had not the faintest pretension to the youthful Cornelia. Rich, it is true, and by convention noble, he was the only offspring of an aged debauchee. Too effeminate for the chase, or other manly pursuit, he crept about enveloped in furs, or lolled in the corner of his chariot. Woe to those who crossed his path, unless their position placed them beyond his reach. No means were too infamous to gratify his malice. He would buy up mortgages, and harass the principals with claims real or supposititious. His only passion was gaming; and this he pursued with a zeal that conferred unusual skill.

In vain Cornelia, in vain her mother entreated the flinty-hearted proprietor; he would listen to no surrender of a father's enormous claims. His daughter, it was his pleasure, should marry this rickety lordling. Meantime Cornelia had given her heart to another, an officer in the garrison, high enough as to rank, but whose only heritage as younger brother was his sword.

"You shall not be sacrificed, sweetest," said her mother; "your rights and mine take precedence of this harsh bidding. Conrad, I know, is confest to your affections; I believe, I trust, he is not unworthy of them. Never shall rude constraint be enforced upon my child!"

Unauthorised, I waited on the proprietor; but dark as night became his lowering brow when he learned my errand.

"Sir," said he, "you doubtless mean well, but my decision is unalterable." Turning on

his heel, he was about to leave the apartment, but in spite of himself his attention was arrested.

“What!” I exclaimed: “would you unite your child to a gambler, a very wretch? I can lead you to fathers whom he has ruined, debtors whom he has immured for years; in fine, to those, whom, stripped of fortune and consideration, he has reduced to beggary and despair.”

Nor was it unadvisedly I spoke. Coming home from a round of fatiguing visits, I was adjured by a little girl to repair straightway to her mother’s, where a stranger lay dying. I hurried as directed, and found in effect a miserable object, his head supported by a young woman, pale, dishevelled, yet of rare beauty.

The dying man feebly raised his head. “I have little to say,” he murmured, “and for that little my fast-ebbing strength will hardly suffice. In an

evil hour, I came to know Lord Elfenbein, contested with him at the gaming-table, lost heavily, played afresh, and lost again ; this time handing over my acceptances. The bills became due ere I could raise the amount. In short, I was stripped of my all, and left utterly destitute."

I laid this instance with others before the proprietor. His firmness I could see was shaken ; at last finding utterance, he exclaimed : " What would you have of me ? My consent has been given, the day is fixed, I could not, if I would, withdraw."

Sick at heart, I hastened away. Drifting rain and struggling smoke made up a dreary whole too accordant with my own dark thoughts. I listed not whither I went, until well nigh lost in the maze of streets and lanes. Pausing for an instant, to consider my way, I found myself beside an open portal. Two men conversed in low but earnest tones. One, seated in a carriage,

I could not be mistaken, was no other than Lord Elfenbein; the second——

“My lord, I shall attend to your lordship’s commands with punctuality and despatch: the conveyance is stringent, and minute as to the estate which I visited for the purpose.”

“Yes, yes,” broke in his lordship, “the vain old fool is willing to sign anything. His daughter shall have name and fame, I shall have the cash. I say nothing till the old gentleman’s decease, and then, why then, the stiff prude and swaggering blade her son shall find their master. I shall divide the mansion and the wide domain; they shall have the outside, I shall have the in—tehee!”

“Just so,” replied the man of business: “a conveyance all right and in due form of the proprietor’s estate as dower to his daughter—ahem!”

“And now I think of it,” resumed his lord-

ship, you may throw the girl in a few hundreds as pin-money : that I think will do."

" Ah, my lord, you are too generous : " but the check-string had been pulled, and the nobleman rolled away, the rattle of his carriage-wheels with the howling wind and drifting rain creating one grim discordant clash.

Names, particulars, had been fully stated — a fraudulent marriage-settlement, my friends plundered wholesale ! Pressing claims drew my attention aside : when I saw Cornelius, he exclaimed, " So long away, Michael : my father, I grieve to say, is bent on this wretched marriage ; while Cornelia, with her mother's sanction and mine determined to resist, is in despair."

Taking him aside, I made him aware how his inheritance was to be alienated, and he himself reduced to beggary ! Cornelius laughed, it was not come to that, and never should. Cornelia had not married the dice-shaking lord, and the estates would descend as before.

Even this might not have sufficed, but it was otherwise arranged. A gentleman, whom Lord Elfenbein had insulted at play, called him to account on the spot. A violent struggle ensued, in the course of which such injuries were inflicted, that his lordship was borne, fainting and dying, to a mansion on which every luxury of decoration had been exhausted. If the remorseful, yet unrepentant, anguish of a dying sinner could yield compensation, his numerous victims might well have been appeased.

THE YOUNG CORNELIA.

Not less fortuitously, Conrad had succeeded to a distant relative. All obstacles were now removed; and a noble pair as ever stood candidates for human happiness exchanged their plighted vows before the altar of God.

“Michael, I am about to leave my mother,”

and blushes irradiated Cornelia's features as she spoke; "but I could not do so, without first bidding farewell to a friend so warm and true. Never again shall we pull the wild flowers, or challenge each other to contests on the turfy green. That lonely country-house and the warm-hearted race around it come before me as in a dream. The lakes, whose solitude was only broken by the springing fish, or flapping teal, the heather bells, and great red bog where men of other days lie sleeping in breastplates and armlets of ruddy gold; that broad Shannon pursuing its silent course to the sea; the mountain deer, the ancient cross, the broken arch, and moss-grown stone; with the solemn burying-places amid the hills, the tottering towers and legends of wild feuds and buried treasure, never shall I forget. Should Cornelius abide there again, with you to guide, warn, advise, I should have no care: but one so generous, so confiding,

oh, gulfs might yawn into which he might be precipitated beyond recal!"

Glistening tear-drops fell; sobs agitated that gentle bosom! Cornelius was to me a brother, his interests were as those of my own soul. I gave unlimited assurance of my unrelaxing zeal. "To-morrow," I said, "will see you another's: blessings, then, be your portion; and oh, may sorrow never chill your heart, nor disappointment blight your young affections."

I took leave with feelings in which pleasure was strangely mixed with pain. I was jealous of Cornelia's happiness, and in my inmost heart prayed Heaven to secure it. I could have flown to her betrothed, and urged him to cherish the priceless treasure, love's so infinite gift. Radiant with youth, beauty, goodness, Cornelia was to me a creation so pure, so angelic, that I never well entertained the idea of her marriage till it was at hand. And I will not—no, I will not

deny that there was a tugging at my heart, such as some half-repentant sinner might be supposed to feel on being bidden to go forth from Paradise after obtaining a glimpse of the glories within.

CECILIA.

I RUMINATED long and bitterly on a position that shut me out from all sacrifice at the shrine of the heart's best affections. "Out upon thee, Michael!" I at length exclaimed: "hast thou no duties to perform, no sufferings to assuage; nothing, in short, to dwell upon, save thy selfish requirements, thy petty woes?" Then I bethought me of that lone maiden whom a father's death had left without a protector, perchance without a home. I hastened to the humble abode, softly rapped, and inquired if the lady were within.

"Yes, in truth is she," replied the poor woman who rented the decayed mansion; "she is entirely within, wearing out dear life to gain a trifle for herself and the little boy. Oh, her face is whiter than the snow; it is not long, I am thinking, she will be here."

Cruel neglect! I should have seen to it before. I begged the landlady to say, if it should not prove intrusive, Father Michael wished to pay his respects. Entering the apartment, for I had not been detained a moment, I was struck with the propriety that everywhere prevailed. I looked at the young inmate; anguish, watching, had given those glorious features an expression not their own. A basket with needlework stood upon a table, while a tallow candle shed feeble rays on a truckle bed, where a child with pale and pinched features somewhat fitfully reposed.

"Most heartily do I thank you, sir, for your

great humanity ; ah, had my father but heeded my supplications ! But the seduction of the wine cup, with the allurements of inferior associates, undid my efforts, and stilled the voice of conscience in his breast. Sorrow-stricken perished my mother. I have been preserved, perhaps because I humbly prayed to do my duty by this dear child : would, indeed, we were together, and at rest, in a world where bread is no longer watered with tears ! In his last moments my father deplored the past, gazing at us as long as he could see : he was still my father, and for his sake I would omit no effort to preserve our poor existence."

There was nothing perhaps in her resolves that challenged vehement approval ; still the decision with which they had been framed, and the determination with which they were carried out, commanded my respect. I dared not tender the humble pecuniary assistance I was

prepared to offer, and took my leave with sentiments to which I felt that rank or station alone could have no claim.

A few days after, while busied in my study, a letter addressed in a dainty female hand was given in. I broke the seal.

"Rev. Sir," it began; "Your security proved effectual; my employer no longer hesitates to place work at my disposal, and would even forward more. Honest Teresa procures the materials, and negotiates the hire. My brother insists on doubling down the seams: he says, dear child, it gives him pleasure to help his sister. For him I try to be cheerful. That Heaven may bless you is the orphan's prayer! Ever, Rev. Sir, Cecilia Martendale."

"And this," exclaimed I, reflecting on the slender aid I had been able to afford, with the disproportionate gratitude evinced in return, "is the bereaved one's name!"

“How!” ejaculated Cornelius. “Why, that was the designation of a famous toast, the acknowledged belle of this gay city. She was one whose transcendent beauty gained lustre from a seriousness unusual at her years. I admired, nay loved her—as a youth admires and loves for the first time—and that was with heart and soul. What would I not have given to utter one of the airy nothings that flowed in from all around? I adored her with my eyes, indeed, but no words embodied what I felt. Suddenly she vanished like a falling star. Her father, it was whispered, had become insolvent; and all my efforts failed to elicit her address: strange, it is the very name!”

“Possibly,” said I, a new light breaking in upon me, as I reflected on her uncommon beauty, and the exquisite propriety of her demeanour, “she is the Cecilia whom you once knew.”

“Cecilia Martendale,” exclaimed Cornelius: “it must be so;” then smiting his forehead with his hand, he strode with fiery impatience through the apartment. “But no,” he continued; “I dare not wait upon her; the strictest observance is now more than ever called for. My sister shall replace me, and through her intervention I shall see the angel Cecilia once more!” But Cornelia was married, and away, and time must elapse ere she could return. He therefore sat down and wrote:

“In the absence of a sister, Cornelius——ventures to address Miss Martendale. But a moment has elapsed since he learned the deplorable events that have ensued since he had the honour of her acquaintance. Miss Martendale has no longer a parent; might Cornelius——venture to lay the homage of his devotion at her feet?”

This communication I undertook to deliver.

For a moment the lady's colour went and came; her features quivered, then resumed their wonted calm.

“Infinite thanks, sir,” she replied, “for courtesies grateful to one bereft as I am. Adversity has trodden me with iron heel; but if subdued I am not cast down, and shall be well content for a brother's sake to walk cheerfully in the humble path which has been marked out for me. Thrice thanks, then, for your compassionate remembrance, your so gracious offer: but, sir, your path and mine are now remote and separate. That you may be happy is my earnest prayer; and now, farewell!”

Cornelius was hardly to be turned from his purpose by such a communication as this; but what was to be done? He longed to clasp Cecilia to his heart, for he felt that she was his, and, regardless of convention, to place himself and his all at her disposal. Meanwhile, my

friend and I held frequent converse on the condition of the classes to whose level Cecilia had so magnanimously descended. It argued, we thought, a low civilisation that presented multitudes anxious, willing, to undergo every toil for the morsel which even this did not always ensure. Future ages would look back astonished at a period when people implored the meanest sustenance from door to door. No government realised its mission that neglected to provide for the humblest member of the body politic.

“ Oh,” exclaimed Cornelius ; “ that raiment to cover us, a roof over our heads, and food to nourish us, should be so difficult of attainment ! For to what end are riches—to what do they all come ? The lord in his castle, the lady in her bower, enjoy little more material satisfaction than the hut-sheltered peasant with a bare sufficiency. Costliest hangings, robes glittering with every dye, do not necessarily ensure

greater satisfaction than a mud-built hovel and plain attire.

“Could I so order it,” continued Cornelius, “I would render every man, every working man, a miser in grain, till his independence had been secured—would have him debar himself of every superfluity till this so desirable consumption had been realised. Better spare to-day than want to-morrow. I would teach him to consider the bank for savings as the gate of heaven, the dram and pawn shops as portals of hell ! He should work and strive, expending no surplus farthing till he had gained the needful sufficiency for him and his. The money realised by publicans and pawnbrokers alone would handsomely feed, clothe, educate, all the children of the working poor.

“Bodily comfort would not engender spiritual indifference. Far from it : those who by thrift and industry have made provision for the body

will oftenest, perhaps, be found to attend to the wants of the soul also. Physical degradation, destitution, and improvidence—hear it, ye people, and ponder it well—are the grave of religion and morality! But, Heaven be thanked, a better day begins to dawn at last—a day in which war, and brutalising insufficiency, and mutual alienation, shall perchance subsist no more—a day in which man shall take his brother by the hand, and patiently, trustingly, await the mighty change which is to translate from death to life—to endless communion, not only with the Almighty, but with all that is great and good and glorious in his rich domain.”

The young Cornelia had now returned: Cornelius hastened to embrace a sister.

“ Ah, dearest Cornelia, you know not what has happened: I have discovered my Cecilia, isolated, poverty-stricken; her only companion a child whom she fosters and brings up. You,

my sister, will interpret my wishes ; prove my intercessor and my friend. My means are ample ; and Cecilia, or no one, shall be the partner of my life !”

Cornelia was not slow to meet a brother’s wishes ; Cecilia should be her best, dearest, friend, and one more victim snatched from dire adversity. Her carriage was soon on its way ; but on arriving at the squalid abode, the lost found treasure was no longer to be seen.

Cornelius flew : fortunately I was at home. Cecilia had, indeed, disappeared ; never, it would seem, to return. The following communication afforded the only clue to her intentions :—

“ Rev. Sir,— You may not appreciate my motives, but I feel that I could act no otherwise than I do. Adversity has taught me to view the world perhaps too severely, and to look upon others, if not as enemies, at least as indifferent to my humble welfare ; for who

would care to propitiate the outcast and the beggar? At times a different feeling whispers hope and consolation to my torn breast — that there may yet be some who love me, and wish me well. But soon the stern monitor dispels the fond illusion. I would fain be spared a second downfall; it were more than I could bear. For a beloved brother's sake I have endured; for him, indeed, I could work and strive, and pray and weep; but another stroke would bury me for ever! Even for him I could no more; and we should sink into one abyss of irretrievable misery.

“No, let me cherish his young heart while yet I may; foster his budding intelligence till sturdy manhood come to his aid: then, my labour of love accomplished, my cares brought to a close, the dim eye and weary heart might gladly sink to rest, thankful to avert chill penury's pressure from his head, though a sister's

blood were the price of the cherished immunity. Enough if in after years, mid happier scenes, a lingering regret, some stray chord of the heart's tones vibrating to the name of Cecilia, should remind him of her that was gone, and waken in his bosom the earnest though not to be gratified wish, that the absent one were there to share the felicity she had died to secure !

“ Kind friend, adieu ! Seek not to discover my humble abode, my secret home : the search were vain. Should urgent need assail, be assured I shall seek you again, but it is much more likely I bid you for ever farewell.”

Tears, shall I confess it, followed the perusal of this so unmistakeable evidence of lofty energy and deep despair. I felt wholly at a loss : “ And yet,” broke in Cornelius, “ it must be done ; Cecilia's resource is her needle ; this will serve to discover her.”

Vainly, however, had he recourse to those

who gave out work in the city ; and it was only after long search that Cornelius and his sister ascertained, at a remote establishment, that an aged woman was in the habit of seeking employment for an individual wholly unknown. It was not, indeed, the first time, as it should not be the last, that the widows and orphans of decayed gentry sought by secret industry to eke out their flagging resources.

Even as they spoke, a decrepit woman came slowly in, and with tremulous accents, for she was very old, requested the arrears, as her mistress was not in circumstances to undertake any more work. The proprietor instantly assented, humanely adding, that he hoped her mistress was not ill.

“ No, not exactly ill, blessed be God ; but the little brother is dying of the sickness : ” adverting to the fever which just then was decimating the population.

Joy, tempered by exquisite sorrow, now animated the heart of Cornelius; he trusted his task was about to be crowned with success. Turning to the woman, he told her he wished to see her mistress; but the creature, faithful to her trust, repelled his advances, and prepared to depart.

"Listen," said Cornelius: "do I look like one who would injure your precious mistress? But I had forgotten a weightier spell." Uncounted gold now rolled into the withered hand; and as the chink fell on her palsied ear, the aged crone mumbled out, — "Ah, I do not think you would hurt my young mistress."

They would have taken her into the carriage, but the poor soul would have failed to recognise her way; she could only show it, and that by going on foot. They followed her devious steps, till at length they reached a spot in the "Liberties." A court, paddled into mud, lay before a ruined

dwelling. The paling had long disappeared, but a stunted poplar still withstood the sickly influences of the place. A tottering stair gave difficult access. Cornelius and his sister ascended to the topmost landing. Here the old woman paused, and, after some hesitation, knocked; the door was forthwith opened, and she went in.

“For the sake of the Mother of God, sweet mistress, blame me not. Did not my child that is gone carry you at her breast? Would I do wrong by you—you alone of all the world?” These words were uttered as if in reply to an exclamation which anguish alone could have extorted.

“Alas! what have you done, thus to expose me to the gaze of a pitiless world?” Then, as if checking itself, that thrilling voice again uttered — “Thou, poor old faithful Teresa, forgive my impatience; dry up thy tears. Oh,

gracious heaven, I know not what I say! Hark, he calls! Dearest little brother, I come, I come."

Cornelius breathed short and quick; his heart-strings were wrung. He stood irresolute; but his sister, with a woman's quick instincts, penetrated at once into the dreary abode. That tearful eye, that face so full of sympathy, spoke volumes of comfort to the suffering Cecilia.

"Oh! if he only do not die," she exclaimed; while tear-drops, that would not be stayed, burst through her long white fingers.

The young women conferred in low but earnest tones; peace and confidence were at length restored to their bosoms.

The dear child, wrapped in one of Cornelia's shawls, was conveyed to the carriage. Cecilia took her place beside him; and soon they arrived at a dwelling replete with every luxury — strange contrast to the rude shelter they had for ever left.

No one suffered from this act of devotion. With change of air and generous sustenance the little patient recovered quickly and well, while the memory of the past became as a troubled dream. Cecilia herself began to taste the blessed fruits of tranquillity and peace. The stern energy which had supported her gave way to gentler impulses. The terrible ordeal was past, leaving her unscathed, heart whole, as in her earliest prime. Yet she should not forget those with whom her lot for a time had been cast. What, indeed, of aged men, of women, passing the residue of earth's existence in darkling gloom—tender infancy tasting life's miseries ere the bud had well opened to the sun? But Cecilia was wise, she was good; and piously ministered to the wants of the destitute; ere she became the wife of Cornelius, then and after, all her life long.

THE POOR STUDENT.

THIS passion well over, I resumed my pleasant communings with Cornelius. They comprised those topics so profitable between friends — our hopes, joys, fears, now and again. What life — whither, ah, whither away ; what sin, where our safety, our spiritual safety, lay ; wherefore crime, and poverty, with man's sad wanderings after unrealised good : and more especially, the morrow — the soul's morrow — when life, and hope, and promise, and performance, should be one !

I had been arranging some papers. One of these, a packet tied with a faded riband, and labelled "The Poor Student," Cornelius happened to displace. "That," said I, as he gazed inquiringly, "concerns two true hearts as ever throbbed in human bosom. I had proposed to

acquaint you with their history before, but the opportunity never seemed to come till now."

I.

Charles to Ellen.

" Yes, dearest, I have given up the priesthood, and, with it, priestcraft for ever. The only craft I vow submission to, is the craft of your sweet eyes, Ellen—the love-craft of that priceless heart!

" Idiot, madman, to think that book-lore could replace the interchange of the affections, or dim phantasmata an ambition fired with loftiest impulses, cravings infinite.

" Away, hypocrisy—deception, with all false tendencies, away! Am I not an Irishman, a man, a denizen of this glorious universe; one of the infinite throng which God hath called into being, that they might rejoice in light, and life, and hope, for ever?

“ I could have preached a truthful and merciful Creator, a Being who wills the happiness and advancement of us all ; but I could not do homage before the altar of intolerance, could not forswear the dearest privileges of man.

“ How could I raise a voice to condemn the pure in practice, albeit the wanderer in belief? To what—to sufferings coeternal with existence, during the soul’s long morrow—the sacred period of life, and hope, and fruition to come.

“ Crucified One, how have they perverted thee ! Didst proclaim peace and unity among all men ; didst bid all to come and drink of the waters of life freely—to look upon God even as a father and a friend ? O Thou, who bespeakest thyself a sufferer with the common family of mankind, neither exalting thyself unduly, nor professing a false abasement, type of excellence, whither art thou fled ? Precious, tortured, yet still glorified, would thou wert

again with us, that I too might go out with thee, and with thee proclaim everlasting opposition to the vice, the folly, the deceit, and debasement of the world! Own Ellen, farewell."

II.

"And so I must part with the green land of my birth, you, Ellen, all I hold dear. Still, yet still, shall I walk under God's gracious canopy; still carry with me the one abiding consciousness of your love, your never-ceasing constancy. By the sacred sun of heaven, by the pure light of truth, by all my hopes of bliss, your precious image has never left my heart! Shall I forget the kiss, locked in your arms, the fond confession strained to your bosom? Never!

"But what can I do, my Ellen? Ireland, perforce, must I leave. Among proud aristocrats, aspiring agents, or the poverty-stricken masses,

where were there scope? Shall I pander to the one, so that I may trample on the other? Shall I dole out barren formulæ in place of words of eternal life, or grind with fresh oppression the vitals of the poor?

“I shall hie me to the capital; there, amid the swarming myriads, your Charles perchance shall find bread. Sturdily shall he labour for the daily pittance. No plodding dray-horse toils more steadily than shall the fiery courser whose proud neck never knew bit or rein. This, and a thousand times this, for Ellen.”

III.

“Dearest, I am promised a passage by O’Brien, and have been to arrange matters ere I sail. A sense of oppression comes over me when I think of it, uncertain of the present, though not oblivious of the past.

“ Now I have embarked, seen you for the last —no, mercy of heaven, not the last time! The vessel heaves, now settles to the swell; while dimly and yet more dimly fade the mountains which something at times whispers I shall behold no more! No more! Ah, words of solemn import, doubtless inspired by my position, yet possibly true. It might be then I should see no more those grey cliffs, washed by the brine, assailed by the breeze, of many a thousand years. Time was, my Ellen, when I careered past them by dusky morn or twilight grey, as with sharp outline they stood against the sky, or enveloped in haze, dark, ill-defined, motionless.

“ What is there in the ceaseless wash of the abysmal sea, so attuned to the soul's deep gloom? Oh, thou dark, restless, melancholy deep, many a secret lies shrouded in thy heaving bosom; many a sigh has been breathed into thee, seemingly not unsympathising, and tears, briny

as thy waters, have coursed down cheeks, cold, perchance forgotten, into thy drifting depths.

“ How is it, Ellen, one comes so to love one’s native land, the green hills and running streams ; the clanging birds and fair wild flowers — memories that will not be rooted out ? The wondrous second universe that leaps in at the eye, and takes possession of the senses, does it abide in our consciousness for ever ? Shall the grass grow green, Ellen, the birds sweetly sing, the blossoms open freshly, in eternity ? Ere ever odours assailed the nostril, or jewels flashed on human vision, were they born of the conceptions of God ! Thou swiftly-coming eternity, ere we plunge into thy measureless recesses, it is sublime to think we do not go alone ; that the past shall be with us, and that in highest empyreum we shall be lulled by harmonies, all akin to those that have soothed us here.

“ But inscrutable are these mysteries — long

must be the line that would sound infinity, daring the intellect that would pierce the shrouded grave. We advance a little, but adamantine walls, before which the surge of thought chafes vainly, bar farther access."

IV.

"Sweetest, best, how cheap dear life, were one unfettered! Our wants indeed are few, but to imaginary requirements there is no end. Why must one wear clothes of such hue; eat such food; live in such apartments, and no other? Nature and her great realities are swallowed up in convention.

"At times, I fancy myself in stream-skirted isle or wooded upland of distant Canada or far Australia. I see a hut raised by willing hands: already a garden blooms in the wilderness, and the forest gives way to waving corn. It is

sunset; ruddy beams shoot athwart the tepid air; a soft voice calls; little ones look for me!

“Alas, it is but a dream; would it were the dawning of a better day! And yet, why not? Oceans insuperable do not roll between us and lands of promise. Where the wayfarer has gone, there also may we go. I ask but room to plant my foot, no one to turn it away, where I may labour, and fruits responsive cheer the glorious toil. Heavens, to sleep, to wake on soil I might call my own, where rolling grass and ripening grain owned no other master! For this, indeed, could I strive; for this, O Ellen, could I work and pray.”

v.

“Babylon, ho! Here lie we, amid countless masts, in a turbid yet noble stream. It is night,



but the vast city is not yet hushed : voluminous sounds reach the ear from afar. Dark clouds cover the seat of future enterprise ; what eye shall pierce them ? Shall I live and prosper, or, like myriads, sink to rise no more ? Come what may, let there be no faltering hand, no flagging purpose : by the eternal heavens, I shall do or die ! Would it were morning, that I might begin ; but whither shall I go, to whom shall I apply ? There must be noble souls in this wilderness of humanity, this collection of infinite littlenesses. How is it that cities should be so great, and men so small ? Does pressure dwarf their dimensions as with the contiguous forest which the snorting gale lays prostrate ?

“ Here be your merchant princes, ledger lords. Here, swarming parasites, battenning dependants, producing nothing, but living on the heart's blood of those who do. Fiery passion, coercing want, have passed with slimy trail across many

a soul ; while some, erst stainless, earn precarious sustenance by corruption's veriest hire. Society, that should foster, gripes them with iron hand, hot, consuming, merciless. Woe, then, for the poor, the miserable ; but triple woe and mightiest sympathy for the wicked, the sinful, yet once, yes once, all so innocent and pure.

“ Come it will, for it is written in time, when the many must be cared for, as are now the few. I shall not see it, nor thou, dearest, but those who live after us. We shall look on it from a brighter scene, the wanderer's perfect home, where bodily wants and bodily cares shall trouble us no more.”

VI.

“ Here I am in humble apartments. Screaming itinerants and rumbling vehicles keep up incessant din. My hostess and her children, poor,

pallid, withered things, in cellar or garret, here pass the cheerless hours through winter's cold and summer's dusty gloom. My only prospect is a wide expanse of tiles, sometimes even gay under the faint rays of a November sun. But at night, why at night, bright stars gleam, I know them well, such as used to shine over the old trees and older walls of Castle Conellan.

“Rigid abstinence maintains the lamp of life pure, clear, undefiled. I keep no fire, though it be cold at four i' the morn, an hour that never finds me slumbering, but briskly awake to life's great concerns.

“My principal outlay is for stationery. I have written essays, poems, chapters on history, and certain translations, besides editing classic authors with notes and emendations not a few. And wherefore? Why, thou beloved one, I have put them into the hands of booksellers, copying some such circular as the following:

‘ Sir, I am desirous of employment for my pen. My expectations are limited, my wants few, my capacity for labour great. I am aware—I speak in all humility—of the infinite insignificance of a poor literary man, compared with individuals like yourself, dealers in the noblest productions of genius living or dead—productions which too often wear down the sands of life to realize! You procure, you part with them for a song. No matter; I too am willing, so far as in me lies, let the task be what it may. A crumb, however meagre, may well suffice for one who asks but what he earns, and cares little, as regards himself, how poorly life’s banquet be spread.’ ”

VII.

“ Some looked hard, and shook their heads. Heard one rogue mutter to himself: ‘ Town filled with these damned Irish, professing everything,

fit for nothing.' 'One of the trade' proffered a trifle weekly, in consideration of translating the last French romance; getting up school and story books; editing religious publications to suit; preparing sermons for wooden divines, which printed cursive type, and done up in blue wrappers, did duty as manuscript; with my employer's newspaper puffs, and laudatory notices in a periodical in his interests. I was moreover to have an eye to the warehouse, fill up my leisure in making out catalogues, completing indexes, attending sales, and bringing home the books! The next had no ear for my application, but went on to state how he had been to C*, and what extensive orders the University had given him. A generous soul tendered victuals and a pallet over the store! As for the rest, they declined, with varying degrees of courtesy, my productions, one and all. It was plain, the question was not one of litera-

“ The reporters include a variety of characters, many of them Irish. Literary hodmen, they may be likened to their brethren in humble life—one conveys mortar, the other brains! One helps to construct a house of clay; the other the towering fabric which comprises the history of England and of the world.

“ My associates are civil; they invite me to drink, and even to carouse: attentions I would fain decline. They are astonished at forbearance so opposed to their notions of enjoyment and the ends of existence. Seriousness they esteem folly, temperance a sort of suicide. ‘ Tut, man, why be melancholy? Need never dig your own grave—some one will be sure to do it for you.’ ‘ A merry life, if short,’ cry these joyous children of a larger growth.

“ A gentleman was good enough to conduct me to places worthy of note. Palaces, monuments of the new and olden time, were passed over in

succession. Yet, what is a palace or its inhabitants to me, so I know them not? The veriest hut on God's earth, a hovel on some heathery moor, with whose simple inmates I have laughed or wept, were more than tower or town with which I hold neither communion nor care.

“ The streets of the vast city are so full, ah ! so full of wearing thought and care. They pass, the living swarm. What woes, yea, at times, what joys, are stamped on every brow ? Look at him—ten thousand pounds to pay this day, or he goes into the Gazette ! Fire gleams from his eyes, the well-dressed man. When he left home, his wife had but ordered the carriage to inspect some shawls, his daughter softly warbled the arias of the last new opera. This is morning—what of eve ? Why, then, John Smith is brought home a corpse—expression shall wax and wane on those distorted features no more !

“ Those dark ranges — brick — why, it is mud !
And the dwellers, mud too ; clay, if you will,
but clay, still more perishable than the dwellings,
unless, indeed, when seething fire rends the
frail tenements, and life expires in wildest agony.
Each mansion one grimmer than the other —
out upon thee, London, whited sepulchre !

“ When leisure permits, I saunter through the
endless rows and scan the shifting throng—
the wearing, tearing, working, weaving—the
throes and struggles of two million souls —
rushing, crushing, clashing, crashing, all for
bread, the weary, weary bread.

“ Never a passing emotion, but has left impress
indelible. Each of those sallow, jerking, melan-
choly objects might give utterance to a century
of lives. What strivings, heart and soul rendings,
to succeed ; yet wasted, blasted, to fail and die !
What avalanches of human destruction—five
myriads every year ! What thoughts, what

yearnings, are stirred up by this vast arena of busy existence ! Were it in me, I could have a care over each one of the huge multitude ; but thou, O God, hast ordered it, wiser, better than I could even conceive. Ever, ever thine."

IX.

" After many instances, I made one of a symposium ! When I arrived, the evening was advanced. Numbers were crowded into a large apartment with a low ceiling. The room was oppressively hot ; and tallow candles, tobacco, and strong drink, sent up a mingled fume. There was a hum of many voices, only interrupted by my introduction to the chairman ; after which the conversation, if conversation it might be termed where every one spoke and no one seemed to listen, went on as before.

" ' Yes, I guess I toss 'em off spry, as friend

Jonathan would say,' exclaimed a youth with lank hair, sallow visage, and assured mien. 'A dozen romances, with as many reviews, travels by the score, I can ticket of an evening—how the devils must stare when they see themselves in print!'

" 'And how do you manage?' rejoined I.

" 'Why, you see, my green friend—no offence, all brothers here—a sight of the title does for one; the table of contents for another; the author's name for a third. If it be a well-known hand, there is some rigmarole praise or blame, a random extract or two, and the usual regret about want of space. Established reputations have it laid on thick; new ones are cut up like lard!'

" 'In what way, then, may I ask, are the public to find out the merits of works professedly reviewed?'

" 'As for that,' said he, laughing, 'egad, they

find it out, or want; they do not think we are going to read all the stuff that comes out. Why, a message is brought with a book, thanking Mr. Slic'em not to cut the leaves. He! he! intellectual publishers! Happy, well-gulled public!'

"Turning from this worthy, my attention was directed to a group that conversed on politics. Men and measures were handled much as the performance of an ass in a cart. 'Fool, knave, apostate, liar,' were expressions freely bandied: it reminded one exactly of the language in the party prints of the day. Leading articles were discussed; but the moral motive, the conviction, was never once adverted to. Some humorously addressed each other under the titles of their respective broad sheets.

"'So, so,' quoth one, 'I gave the Post a sockdologer he will not readily get over; but the fellow, I take it, will reply to-morrow.'

“‘Come, that is not so bad,’ shouted those in hearing, with peals of laughter. And now I was told that, to secure his pittance, the speaker wrote the same cause up in one print, down in another! Oh, it was infamous — no plea of want, no necessity, could excuse it.

“‘Gentlemen,’ interrupted the president, ‘truce to politics — musty, fusty politics — pitch them to the dogs! A toast, gentlemen; are you ready, gentlemen? The ladies, gentlemen! God bless the petticoats, I say!’

“The toast was drank with rapturous applause; fresh vent seemed given to hilarity. Every one laughed and talked without a moment’s remission, unless it were to drain the cup, or inhale the brown cigar. At this juncture, some one was asked to sing; but, confused with the unwonted noise and smoke, I only remember the *refrain*, to which all harked in with frantic energy —

“ ‘ Drink, boys, drink ! ale like this
Ne'er mantled 'neath the sun —
Drink, boys, drink of the ruby wine,
Ere the last red drop be done —
Of mantling ale, and ruby wine,
Ere the last drop be done. ’

“ The party was now in that enviable state when, with few exceptions, every one laughed, talked, declaimed as he listed. At length, the chairman, tapping on the table, restored some degree of order, and electrified me by calling for a song.

“ Could not sing.

“ ‘ A story, then ? ’

“ ‘ A sentiment, if you please. ’ ‘ A sentiment, a sentiment ! ’ it was echoed round, by such, at least, as had not found oblivion below the table.

“ ‘ Restore my youth, ’ exclaimed a noted wit, turning his dying eyes upon a friend !

“ ‘ When summer's sun is done,
And wintry winds blow on ;

When leaves lie on the ground,
White and frore all round,
Adieu, youth, adieu !

‘ When birds are mute and still,
Clogged with ice each rill ;
When clouds are dark and grey,
And night drinks up the day,
Adieu, youth, adieu !

‘ When harp’s sweet song is mute,
The cither and the lute ;
When love’s bright joys are o’er,
And life delights no more,
Adieu, youth, adieu !

‘ When head turns bald and grey,
And nimble feet delay ;
Hands grow stiff and cold,
Heart clings but to gold,
Adieu, youth, adieu !

‘ For then the tale is told,
There’s no more to unfold ;
Time that was, has sped ;
All, all, we loved are fled —
Then adieu, youth,
Adieu, youth, adieu !

“ ‘It is the sigh of expiring nature. Shalt be young no more, till time for thee furl his pinions, and thou art wafted into a world where youth is ever young.’

“Those about me opened wide their filmy eyes. Could not make it out, they said. Was *that* my substitute for a roaring song? But the great majority screamed out, ‘Jolly good song, and very well sung, merry companions every one — ay, every one!’ And, having thus delivered themselves, the maudlin roystering crew dispersed.

“The cool night air soon braced my fevered senses. It was the first, the last symposium I should ever attend. ‘The feast of reason and the flow of soul,’ methought, were poorly replaced by pot-house orgies and bacchanalian scores. The ever-blessed stars shone peacefully above. What thinkest thou, dearest — art thinking of me? Art well — art happy? Ah, sweetest, not all so well, nor all so happy, as with me.”

X.

“Dearest, best, a strange affecting incident has just occurred. You knew my foster-mother, the devoted woman who tended me with even more than maternal care. Poor Bridget, having been deprived of husband and child by one of those casualties so frequent on our western waters, was taken into the house to assist in nursing me. I lost my own dear mother; my father contracted a second marriage; and Bridget, with, it is said, my step-mother’s full consent, bore me to her humble cottage on the Shannon.

“It was thus I first awakened to a perception of this so wondrous world. Those days I shall never forget! While the simple meal was preparing, I would creep to the broad river, and there essay to cast pebbles into the stream. Anon, uttering cries, my foster-mother would snatch me up, and with fondest caresses urge

me to eat. It was holding by her gown that I learned to walk ; clutching, while I did so, at the great red sun gilding the green hills of Connaught, away, away to the sea. Sometimes she led me to the old castle ; and there, while our cow grazed, would hush me with wild legends, tales of other days. She told me how the once proud Conellans, beaten down and subdued, had given way ; some flying beyond the seas, some sleeping by their old ancestral walls, till all that was left to betoken their valour and their fame was the one word

CONNELLAN

traced in ancient characters on the riven stone.

“Bridget’s forefathers were retainers of, had fought, lived, died for, the fallen line. Tears at times relieved her pent-up agonies. Then, drying her eyes, she would clasp me to her heart : ‘for thou, too,’ she said, ‘art one of

them.' Imagine, now, this faithful creature, her white hair streaming, her dark eyes flashing sweet love for the child of her adoption, beside me.

"'You were in London, I knew, and I could not live from you, heart's golden son!' The dear soul, with some vague direction, but my name upon her lips, had traced me out. She talks ever about the 'young mistress;' and, seriously, dearest, I have taken apartments that will suffice for two, in one of the streets leading to the Thames. My chamber opens on the broad river; not so broad or so deeply rolling as our own Shannon. I fancy, surveying the mimic surge, that I could soon gain the open sea, and so on to my own country. Ah me — if I were only there, with you — by that river shore, I should never wander more!

"Delicious day dreams haunt me. A cottage covered with flowers; leafy slopes, where little ones play; a latticed casement, through which

struggling rays illumine pages on which a pale and serious man doth pore ; yet not all so pale and serious, but that his eyes glance and his lips smile, for his love and the darlings of his heart are there." ——

"But the rest," said Cornelius, "where is the rest?"

"There is no rest," I replied : "that life's history is finished, done — a broken sword, a shattered lyre !

' Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play ;
For some must watch, while some must sleep ;
Thus runs the world away.'

"The high-souled man and gentle maiden rest, sweetly rest, by the old walls of Castle Connellan. The aged foster-mother tended them to the close ; and, having placed them in the dust, went late and early to pray by their remains. She, too, one morning, was discovered

cold and still — hands clasped, eyes all sightless, turned heavenward! They laid her, the lot she craved, beside those she loved so well: and now the Conellans, chieftain and kern, foster-parent and foster-child, have vanished from the soil. But they are happy in a land fairer than what Shannon waters, sunnier skies than ever lighted Connaught."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Cornelius, "and they are gone!"

"Yes, in sooth are they," replied I; "clan Conellan and all, hushed together and at rest. Long, bravely, but, alas, vainly, did he struggle with disease. She was in time to gather his last confessions, his latest sighs—ah me, to contract the weary malady, and to die! Some day we shall drop a tear to the memory of the wise, the good; those that were, but are not! They died; but, in virtue of the act, entered on a new life, where love, heart's essence, subsists

free of convention, or place, or space. These sheets must now be consigned to flames. What boots it? The soul that the sentiments they embody, cannot. Fire may destroy the form, but it cannot reach beyond the reach of the elements."

THE LABOURER'S HOPE

As Cornelius advanced in years, his words did not evaporate in words, nor his deeds in good in vain profession. With him was to do; to project, to execute. He had a desire to signalise life, not by name but by noble deeds and lofty aspirations for the good of his kind.

His leisure was spent in inquiries into the best modes of education, tilling the waste, reclaiming the waste, as well as in the services of able and experienced

“There shall be no such estate in Ireland,” said he, “as mine. Never a child, however humble, but shall receive the most careful fostering. Perish the baseness that would lay prostrate the soul of man, and leave incult the principles of our common nature! There shall be schools with every desirable accessory — food for both body and mind; for it were brutal to expect starving infants to learn. Clothing, also, to those in need of it, enforcing cleanliness and self-respect by every available means.

“Religious education, so termed, I would leave to the clergy: as to secular culture, it were essential that each child should be intimately acquainted with its mother-tongue; with natural science in all its branches — from the plant in the field to the pebble on the shore — astronomy, botany, mineralogy, natural history, natural philosophy, and designing; also with insight into the structure of language, and

into the constitution of the human mind. The art of learning languages, desirable in itself, helps to dissipate the magic prestige connected with the cabalistic forms in which the human intellect has loved to shroud itself; disperses prejudice, and lays open those so wonderful vehicles of thought and feeling betwixt man and man.

“ The meanest, poorest, most abortive essay should be carefully encouraged. Consider, it is the groundwork, the glorious first fruits, however imperfect, of an immortal soul. The utmost kindness and firmness should be used, associating toil with pleasure, till these children had been snatched from the bondage of apathy, ignorance, and want of thought, for ever.

“ Competent, well-salaried teachers, male and female, should be appointed from the first, and, as soon as possible, assistants of both sexes, from the more deserving of the pupils.

“ Each child should be impressed with the sacred claims of labour, and the incumbency under which he is born to be serviceable to his kind. Half his time, therefore, would be fitly devoted to study, half to industrial occupation. Exclusive of workshops, there should be attached to every school a farm and gardens effectually tilled ; for manual dexterity opens fresh resources and constitutes an important branch of mental development. Occasionally, the young people, the teachers presiding, should have a little feast, the preparation of which, along with that of ordinary meals, would initiate the girls into the culinary art ; winding up the whole with the graceful and humanizing dance.

“ Select vocal music should be sedulously cultivated, while business should open and close with hymns of praise and thankfulness to the ever compassionate God. The children should

learn the compositions of the great masters—those so precious transcripts of the music of nature—God's music, that infinite solace and forecast of heaven. Loving sentiments, garbed in gracious melodies, are calculated to reform the world. Whom would they not benefit; for who is wholly free from the plague-spots of error and sin? It would recall the lullabies of infancy—the low sweet voices on a mother's knee. The haven of rest and of a blessed eternity, albeit dim and distant, would open again; while, swelling, sweetly swelling, on the elemental air, floods of glorious harmony would waft the regenerate soul to heaven once more!

“But should we neglect the parent while we fostered the child? That were not well. For every peasant I would construct, and maintain in substantial repair, a well-built cottage. There should be poultry, a cow, and the peasant's wealth, a swine, with large enclosed garden, the

whole at an acreable rental. I would supply each family with seeds, plants, cuttings, free of cost ; and, further, allow one day in the week, without deduction of wages, for the culture of the little spot. I should, moreover, maintain a model farm and garden accessible to all ; and in cases of sickness or accident, send some one to look after the poor man's affairs.

“ The estate should be drained and trenched at my own expense : while I advised the general adoption of spade labour, with house-fed cattle, my draught oxen should be at the service of the tenants in all agricultural straits. I would follow the best system of alternate husbandry, and, both by precept and example, do what I could to extend to all the advantages I enjoyed. Encouragement should be given to those who kept the neatest houses and most comfortably attired families, as well as prizes for superior stock and crop. And every month my butcher

should slaughter, by the humane and almost painless method of pithing, abundant sheep, swine, oxen, on which occasions well-cured joints and fresh meats should find their way to every householder.

“ I would maintain decked vessels for the deep-sea fishery, and nets for drawing along the shore. My people would catch enough for sale at nominal prices to cover expenses, as well as leave a handsome surplus for gratuitous distribution. Turf, well compressed and dried, should be everywhere available at cost price. A skilful physician, with competent assistants, should attend the poor ; and disease would no longer ensue from destitution and neglect.

“ In other respects,” said Cornelius, “ I should arrange that my labourers, either in addition to, or in lieu of wages, should have a proportion, say a tenth, of the aggregate produce of the soil. Having a direct interest in the fruits of

their toil, they would redouble exertion, and realize an increase beyond any thing that mere driving could insure. Landlords would gain, not lose, by leases in perpetuity; arrangements founded on human nature, and directly conducive to the interests of all concerned. For labour, this so precious yet underprized commodity, will not always so abound; inducements one day shall be held out to cause the husbandman to remain, in place of brutally driving him away.

“Already, I have purchased tracts in Canada and at the Cape, far exceeding my paternal domains. These are under proper management, and my tenants, when their numbers surpass the bounds of decent subsistence at home, shall be at liberty to settle on my colonial estates abroad, where well-appointed farms and comfortable dwellings await them. The voyage would be performed in vessels chartered for the

purpose, in the society of friends, and would resemble a party of pleasure rather than the dreary transit of forlorn emigrants. And thus," continued Cornelius, "I should provide for the poor."

I was affected, I shall confess it, and prayed the Lord, with heart and soul, that life and means might be accorded to accomplish his designs, and set a golden example to the aimless, thriftless, unfeeling landlords of Ireland and of the world.

"You accord me more credit," resumed Cornelius, "than I deserve. It is well to propose, better still to execute; success, after all, is the criterion to which I cheerfully bow. I am far, indeed, from thinking, that a world where death and sin and care find admission, is convertible into a paradise—for earth is not man's abiding-place; but I believe that it is susceptible of infinite amelioration, improvements

truly paradisiacal, compared with the want, the crime, the woe that every where abound.

“ Why should toiling, striving man be linked to misery for ever? Labour of head and hand, believe me, is man's best estate and earthly destiny; but it is at the bottom, in place of the top, of the scale. Yet the time is drawing nigh—a little bird whispers it in my ear—when the labourer, the working-man, no longer ignorant, brutalized, debased, shall rise, without impeachment of the claims of any, to the highest, best elevation of nature's aristocracy. Shall he not dwell in palaces who raises palaces? Shall she not go in rich attire whose fingers wind the silk of the toiling worm? Shall the ruby, the diamond, and the red red gold, not glitter on the miner's manly breast, or deck the fingers of his wife and child? Shall she not wear who spins—he eat who sows? Shall the purple juice recruit no more the fainting vine-dresser; or pictures

deck, or choicest harmony cheer, the dwellings of the poor? Yes, by the living God shall they! By the very Majesty of Heaven, man—man himself, shall waken from the trance of ages; and the producer and the consumer, the creator of enjoyments and he who revels in them, shall be one and indivisible once more. Nature's glad voices shall breathe out forcefully again. The carolling birds, the whispering winds, the gorgeous clouds, and perfumed flowers, the sunny earth, the mighty ocean, man's glorious beauty, speak seraph-toned his ineffable destiny, the faint foreshadowings of his final home!"

Never had I so clearly, so hopefully, presented to me the prospects of our race. My whole being was steeped in ecstasy. I saw my countrymen, I saw mankind, no longer care-worn, destitute, but happy, intelligent, free. There need be no more want nor grinding poverty—

men, women, or were it tender infancy, stealing through street or lane, ready to sell body and soul for bread! No shivering children fronting driving rain and pitiless storm—beggary, misery, intemperance, crime, with all their sad abettors, fled. I turned to thank Cornelius for the emotions he had inspired; but he was already gone.

THE LABOURER'S HOME.


IN a few days I waited on my friends; it was to take my leave. I had been ordered to the south, and perchance should revisit Dublin no more. "Fear not," exclaimed Cornelius, "I shall be faithful to the end; the interests of the poor and oppressed shall be to me as those of my own soul."

In effect, he repaired shortly after to his estates, and, convening his tenants, informed them of his designs. They, he expected, would

perform their part; he should not fail in his. Labourers were engaged in force; a field was drained, while substantial refreshments from time to time were handed round. At night, wages, more liberal than had ever been known before, were handed over in full.

Superior instructors were set to work in the schools; and the little ones, their tasks well done, were dismissed each with a sturdy hunch in hand, happy to learn on the terms, and firmly resolved to return on the morrow.

Artisans were collected, and well-arranged cottages erected. In short, there was no single projected improvement that Cornelius did not set about without delay; for he had, above most men, the deep conviction of life's short span, and of the necessity of prosecuting our designs on the instant. Costly time was not wasted in idle words; what was clearly thought was promptly done.



The people were delighted — they were enchanted! Inexperienced, ignorant, they had been suspicious at first; but soon happiness sat on every brow, blessings poured from every tongue! With comfort, the inclination was awakened to retain it. The doctor, on the principle that prevention is better than cure, took sickness by the forelock, and the immunity from disease became altogether unprecedented. Good food, and plenty of it, averted fever—warm clothing, inflammation and other maladies. Superior dwellings replaced, as if by magic, the miserable hovels of the poor; trim fields and gardens, with a hearty, contented peasantry, sterility and grim despair. Cornelius paid the rector his tithes, the priest his dues, the presbyterian minister his stipend, the methodist preacher his salary; for each was satisfied to receive his conventional hire, without driving the unwilling or coercing the destitute. His expenditure in

these several directions might be some three or four thousand a-year; but the princely outlay, for he held himself the steward of his means, was well repaid. Rents were handed in with hilarious alacrity — no process-serving, no distraining, no eviction of tenants, no unroofing of houses. Sharp practitioners had to take themselves off, or seek other employment; publicans, pawnbrokers, were fain to close their doors. Then, O Cornelius, wast thou happy; didst enjoy the God-like privilege of doing good, and of setting an example which, if followed, would convert Ireland into an Eden, and banish misery, want, and blasting strife, for ever!

THE LOT OF THE JUST.

SADLY contrasting with Cornelius, a neighbouring landlord, in concert with his agent, was guilty of every base and mean infliction on his

hapless tenantry. Lawsuits, distraining, with all the low machinery of petty oppression, were in daily requisition. Opposed in religion—religion, forsooth—as in politics, to his vassals, he esteemed them but as materials for his appetites and pleasures.

This man, if his vaunting could be depended on, was not deficient in courage ; but, whether or no, he omitted no ingredient of security. Heavily accoutred himself, he was constantly escorted by armed followers ; while door and window, like too many in Ireland to this day, were secured by bolt and bar. Of and to the peasantry, he spoke in terms of infamous discourtesy. My friend's position and force of character constrained a semblance of respect ; but, out of his presence, he lost no opportunity to deride his measures.

The riband conspiracy was now at its height ; but this, with its aiders and abettors, Rix, such

was the tenor of his language, damned to the lowest pit of hell ; and dared them all, both great and small, to come within the range of his gun. It had, however, been resolved in the councils of the riband-men that Rix should die ; and, according to the wont of this dread tribunal, not unlike the *Fehm-Gericht* of the middle ages, resolute men from a distance were appointed to carry the dire decree into execution.

Ruffians took their stand, determined at every odds to do their bloody bidding. Blood, indeed, was shed, but not that of their intended victim. Cornelius had public business with his neighbour. To secure an interview, it was necessary to proceed to the house ; and he had but reached the avenue, when the horses' heads were seized, and the assailants bawled out, " Are you Squire Rix ? " But, ere the loud emphatic " no " had well escaped Cornelius's lips, bullets pierced his breast. The startled cattle forged ahead,

and when they were at length secured, the murderers had fled.

They laid the wounded man, heavily groaning, along the seats, and proceeded to urge the horses in the direction of Squire Rix. "Not there, not there," he feebly ejaculated; "home, hie home."

It was done! When the wife of Cornelius saw her husband borne wounded, bleeding, into the house, one wild shriek, followed by a death-like swoon, attested her agony. Aided by her women, she at length revived, and, pale, dishevelled, approached her husband's couch. A faint smile lit up his features; he signed to his attendants to withdraw.

"Cecilia," he murmured, "my strength is ebbing fast, the respite is short, hear me to the close. Were it not for leaving you, my precious wife, my infant son, my noble mother, sister, Michael, and, oh, my task undone, I could die in

peace! Train my child in his father's principles, and, when he reaches manhood, let him complete what I have begun. Meanwhile, O my Cecilia, let some honest man have charge of my estate, and, so far as may be, act as I have tried to do. Farewell, heart's treasure! Weep not for me. Kiss, oh, kiss me ere we part; precious infant—O my son!"

He told her he left her guardian to his child: directed presents to his servants; to Michael, a ring. Once, and yet once again, he motioned to embrace her; then, leaning back his poor exhausted head, whispered: "Thy will, O God, be done." Blood, mingled with air, now rushed from his mouth, frothed from his wound. The breathing grew frightfully laborious; he tried, but utterance came not at his call. One look at the heavens without, one at those he loved, and the spirit had taken its eternal flight.

Oh, for words to speak that young wife's

agony—the woe of those devoted people ! Hot tears, and wailing, and wringing hands, there were for miles around—to each, to all, Cornelius had been a friend. In relays of hundreds, they prayed for his recovery, or, failing that, for the repose of his soul :

“ Merciful God, Saviour of the world, grant he may not die ! Oh, master, leave us not ! Thou all-compassionate God, be merciful to his soul ! ”

Generous peasantry, warm-hearted countrymen, lament no more. God indeed hath taken him from you, from a land that so much needed him, to his eternal rest. But He will raise you other comforters ; and time, perforce, must come, when want and misery shall oppress you no more.

Thick as leaves the people gathered on the strand. Tears watered the soil, sighs rent the air. Presently there came a dirge fitfully gushing, as the long procession wound by the

mountain's base to the lone burying-place by the shores of the sobbing sea. It was the "Irish Cry" in that ancient and yet unperished tongue:

"Oh! father, more than father, hast left thy children? We were not good enough for thee. God hath taken thee because of our sins — Honerie!

"Sweet and good wast thou beyond the common of men — never shall we look upon thy like again — Honerie!

"Art gone to glory, so, thou ever blessed master, farewell!" But grief broke down their utterance, and the coffin was placed in the earth amid sighs and tears.

It was a grey autumnal morning: no breeze shook the musky foliage; no wind ruffled the waters of the bay. The last sad rites had been rendered; the mourners were gone, and I stood by the grave of my friend alone. Suddenly, the dark clouds scattered, mellow light gushed over

hill and tree, and sorrow ceased to press so heavily on the soul. Thus, light, in truth, has issue out of darkness, joy out of grief, and, mercy of heaven, life out of death again !

THE MORNING'S DAWN.

I PAUSED by Reginald's tower on Waterford's stream. Men, women, children—haggard, forlorn, kept crowding by. Vice, grovelling error, had left dark traces on many a brow. Was there but one of that circling throng, who, in lofty port and noble bearing, upheld the dignity of his kind, gave trace and token of man's immortal destiny? I hid my face and wept—O God, there was not one !

Again, another change ; it boots little now. Yet once must I revisit Dublin—watch one more night by Marion's grave, meditate by

Cornelius's tomb, then turn my face for ever away.

I stand by the brink of the masterless sea. Huge waves boom in majesty. The wind sighs with gentler cadence 'mid the rifted hills, bowing the wild plants as it hurries along. But my thoughts are far away. I pause by the shores of a mightier ocean, whose sands are time, whose waves are eternity! The future is about to lift its veil. My span of life is done, my term is drawing nigh, my little measure of usefulness is filled to the brim. Hail, then, blessed future — many-peopled regions of infinity, all hail! Farewell, busy world — ye refreshing streams, and, oh, ye many-voiced winds of heaven, farewell! Farewell, too, thou provident nature; soon, Michael shall need thy sustenance no more. Fellow-men, fellow-countrymen, I bless you. Almighty God, raise, protect my country! Cleansed from ignorance, error, sin, raise

her in the scale of nations. Bless her with peace, a cheerful sufficiency. May her green valleys and emerald slopes resound to hymns of praise and thankfulness. Heaven's choicest gifts, O Ireland, await thee. Sisters, brothers of earth, farewell !

THE END.

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A CATALOGUE OF NEW WORKS AND NEW EDITIONS

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